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To the Editor of the Christian Journal.

THE PRINCIPLE on which Bible Societies (strictly so called) are founded, and the actual operation of these institutions having, of late years, become subjects of wide discussion and of increasing interest, I avail myself of the privilege reserved to me in your notice of Dr. Miller's reply to my first communication,* to offer some additional

* See the Christian Journal for February, p. 47.—Dr. Miller was not contented with inserting his reply in the Journal, because "the remarks which he answered had been stricken off on a separate sheet, and circulated far beyond the sphere of the Journal itself;" he therefore sent it, with a few prefatory observations, to the *New-York Observer*, a liberal paper, the principle of which is, if I am rightly informed, to exclude every thing of a controversial nature. Had the Editor of the *Observer* inserted at the same time, the remarks of the Journal on Dr. Miller's communication, or the piece of Catholicus, to which he replied, no censure would have attached to him; but under present circumstances, I must be allowed to say, that it was not honourable to publish one side of a dispute, without giving any facts by which ordinary readers might judge of the fairness of the reply. I must also be allowed to say, that it does not seem very honourable to give wider currency to a communication which was proved, in the accompanying editorial remarks, to contain erroneous statements with regard to the opinions of Bishop Hobart.

"If I have understood the scope of what has been said and written against Bishop Hobart," says Dr. Miller, "it is—not that he is zealously attached to his own Church—not that he admires and loves the Book of Common Prayer, and is earnestly desirous of putting it into the hands of every human being to whom it can possibly be conveyed: for all this, I have never heard him blamed by any one: but for being unwilling to unite with any society, the object of which was to circulate the word of God alone." Had Dr. Miller examined carefully 'what has been said and written' against Bishop Hobart, he would have found that his opponents go much farther than he supposes. Bishop Hobart has been accused of making the Prayer Book a "substitute for the Bible;"—of holding the opinion that a "knowledge of Scripture will be more promoted by the distribution of the Prayer Book, than of the Bible itself,"—"of pointing out a book which will answer the purposes of the Bible;"—of labouring to "destroy the only instrument by

remarks on the merits of the question which has been agitated, and by way of strengthening these remarks, to introduce the opinions of an American prelate,† who stands deservedly high in the estimation of all who know and can appreciate his character, for soundness of principle, consistency of conduct, ar-

which the glad tidings of salvation could be conveyed to millions who were ready to perish;"—of attempting to "stem that pure river of the water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb," &c. &c.—(See the first Letter of the 'Churchman of the Diocese of New-York' to Bishop Hobart, where these charges are preferred, pp. 15, 16, 17, 18, 47, 50, 78, 79.)—Some of these are the very objections made by the opponents of Creeds and Confessions, and as Dr. Miller had answered them very ably, (pp. 39, 41, of his Lecture,) I surely had a right to bring forward his sentiments as a valid *argumentum ad hominem* to those who agreed with him in uniting with the Bible Society.

Dr. Miller further remarks: "If I believed, indeed, that the peculiarities of the Church of which I am a member, were essential to salvation; or that it was impossible for a serious inquirer to understand the fundamental doctrines of Scripture, without the assistance of my formularies and expositions, my conduct would be different. But as I believe neither, I am, of course, not embarrassed with any of the consequences of such belief." Such were the Professor's opinions in the winter, while addressing Episcopal editors; in the preceding summer, however, while addressing Presbyterian students, he had used what, to me, seems somewhat different language. The doctrines contained in the Westminster Confession, he observes, "I believe to be the radical truths which God hath revealed in his word: and while they are denied by some, or frittered away or perverted by others who profess to believe that blessed word, I am verily persuaded they are the fundamental principles of the plan of salvation,"—in other words, that they are essential to salvation. Again, he says, that Confessions of Faith "serve an important purpose, as accredited manuals of Christian doctrine, well fitted for the instruction of those private members of Churches, who have neither leisure, nor habits of thinking sufficiently close, to draw from the sacred writings themselves a consistent system of truth,"—that is, to understand without such helps the fundamental doctrines of Scripture.—*Compare Christian Journal, Feb. with the Lecture*, pp. 39, 35.

† [Bishop Ravenscroft.] See Postscript.

dent devotion to the cause of his Redeemer, and undeviating conformity to the doctrines and discipline of the Church, of which he is 'an overseer.'

In the 'advertisement' to my comparison of the writings of Dr. Miller and Bishop Hobart, I stated that it was not my wish 'to revive the old, or to invite a new controversy,' inasmuch as the *principle* for which 'consistent churchmen' were contending, had, in my view, been yielded by their adversaries, and there appeared no further necessity of prolonging the dispute: but as the inferences then deduced have been honoured with the notice of more than one opponent,* and as the ques-

tion has acquired additional importance from its simultaneous agitation in different sections of the Union, I trust that no injury will result to the cause of 'pure and undefiled religion,' from an impartial and dispassionate discussion: on the contrary, I think it the duty of every person who 'calls himself a Christian,' to 'prove all things,' and thus to be 'always ready to give an answer' on a point of so much moment as the proper distribution of the oracles of God.

Under a deep sense of this obligation, therefore, I propose to inquire what is the *true and actual import* of the principle on which Bible Societies are established, and what is the legitimate consequence of admitting the validity of the principle in its full extent: I shall then endeavour to prove that the parent society in this country, instead of adhering to its professed principles, is virtually, at least in part, a *Missionary Society*: and lastly, for the information of such Episcopalians as appear not to be acquainted with their own standards, I shall give some authorities which must convince the unprejudiced, that, consistently with these very standards, they cannot give their countenance or support to institutions, whose object is thus shown to be the encouragement of ordinances not clearly authorized by the word of God, and underived from the Apostles, by regular and undoubted succession.

What then is the actual principle, on which the British and Foreign Bible Society, the American Bible Society, and their numerous auxiliaries, profess to act?

The object of all these institutions is, without doubt, the accomplishment of the greatest good, in the most efficient manner. The design is, ultimately to evangelize the world,—and the mode adopted to evangelize the world, is the distribution of the Scriptures without note or comment. The principle, therefore, in plain and simple language, is this: that 'the Scriptures are exclusively sufficient for their own

* In addition to Dr. Miller's remarks, "Catholicius" has been favoured with a reply of no less than twenty-five duodecimo pages, from a 'Presbyter of Maryland,' entitled the *Dilemma*, and with a passing notice from the Editor of the Philadelphia Recorder. As the latter is a *liberal* paper, much, either *pro* or *con*, could not be expected from it on this occasion. The Editor thinks that 'Catholicius is ingenious,' and that the 'Presbyter of Maryland is ingenious,' but does not condescend to settle the jealousies of these rivals, by informing us which is the *most* ingenious. He says, moreover, that "Catholicius is not remarkable for the *fairness* or *conclusiveness* of his reasonings, and that the Presbyter is *no very powerful answer* to Catholicius,"—all which is, doubtless, very satisfactory to his readers.

With regard to the *Dilemma*, as the author's friends do not think it a 'very powerful answer to Catholicius,' I shall not undertake a refutation of its 'ingenious' reasonings; but there is one fact to which he alludes, which I cannot resist the temptation of repeating, as affording a good commentary on the tendency of promiscuous societies. The fact is nothing more or less than this, that a young Methodist itinerant, whose *simplicity* and eloquence have been much applauded in the United States, attended a meeting of a Bible Society in Baltimore, where, among other pretty *anecdotes*, he stated that those who circulate the Prayer Book with the Bible, were very like the baker, who would never sell a *loaf*, unless a *ginger nut* accompanied it. The 'Presbyter' might have referred to another fact, occurring in the same city not many weeks after, having an important bearing on Union meetings. The Bible Society having assembled in St. Peter's (Episcopal) Church, a number of *stories*, applicable and inapplicable to the occasion, were told by the different speakers,—not the least interesting of which was related by the young minister aforesaid,—of the *harmony* and *good fellowship* which subsisted between the two great Apostles of modern days—George Whitfield and John Wesley!!! When the 'Presbyter of Maryland and Friend of Bible Societies,' publishes a second edition of his *Dilemma*, it is to be hoped that he will give us the particulars of the speech of one whose Bible-Society-oratory has rung

from the City Hotel to Paris, and back again to St. Peter's, Baltimore,—and at the same time inform us what is meant by Bishop White, when he speaks of 'admixture of administrations.'

interpretation,'—and consequently, as there is no other rule of action, 'that the distribution of the Bible without note or comment, is the *only* just mode of proceeding in disseminating the Scriptures of our faith.'

That this is the only *practical meaning* of the fundamental article of the Societies, is admitted by many of their members, and champions, and anniversary eulogists; and those who have opposed the principle, have been denounced as fighting against God, and undervaluing his word. It is denied by others, however, that this construction can fairly be placed upon the article in question; but the inconsistency of their reasoning must be manifest, I think, to every attentive observer. Of the two classes of Bible Society-members who differ on this point, we have very good specimens in the controversy which has arisen in North-Carolina, in consequence of the sermon of the prelate to whom I have before alluded. The Editor of the Raleigh Register admits the principle in its broadest terms. "We have always believed, (he says,) that though the Scriptures contain many things hard to be understood, yet that there is sufficient in them which is plain and intelligible to the meanest capacity, to produce the best effects on the life and character, and sufficient, even without a guide, to teach men their duty to God and their fellow-men." Where men do not think alike, he further observes, "all that is necessary to produce happiness is, that they should think charitably of each other, and agree to differ,—believing that every one who professes himself to be guided by the principles of the gospel, and leads a good life, is sincere in his profession, and will hereafter be approved by his Maker." In other words, we believe that the Scriptures, without a guide, are "sufficient for their own interpretation;" and as every one 'who professes to follow their precepts, and is sincere,' will be saved, we believe that the method which the Bible Societies adopt of sending them abroad, is "the only just principle" on which their truths can be disseminated. One of the correspondents of the Editor, however, denies that "Bishop Ravenscroft esta-

blished his position," when he contended for this construction "of the second article of the Society."* Many of his hearers "still believe (he remarks) that they may lend their patronage to that Society, without sanctioning, in any degree, the erroneous principle which Bishop Ravenscroft denounces." But let us examine the grounds which this gentleman takes to support his apparently inconsistent conduct. The members of the Society "still believe (he says) that the revelation of his will which the God of mercy has made to his creatures, is not a dark enigma, the general import even of which it requires great learning to apprehend: but that if this book be put into the hands of plain unlearned persons, and they study it diligently, nineteen out of twenty of them will derive from it so much of sound doctrine as will secure their salvation; and that to assert the contrary, is to speak irreverently of the divine goodness and wisdom. They would willingly send the *sacraments* along with the word, but as they *have not the means* of doing this, they regard it as a work of enlightened charity to send the latter alone."† Now I would ask any serious inquirer, whether the sentiments contained in the first part of this paragraph, do not lead to the very conclusion which Bishop Ravenscroft had been combating, and which the writer disclaims on the part of himself and his fellow 'hearers.' If "nineteen out of twenty plain unlearned persons will derive so much of sound doctrine [from the Bible] as will secure their salvation," they can need no guide, and the Scriptures to them are "exclusively sufficient for their own interpretation." From these premises, then,

* The second article of the North-Carolina Bible Society, as quoted by one of Bishop Ravenscroft's opponents, is in these words: "The copies of the Bible distributed by this Society, shall be of the version now in use among us, without notes or commentaries, and in *such language* as utility may require." This seems not very perspicuous. If the copies are of the version now in use, utility cannot require any other language. If foreign translations be intended, the copies would certainly not be of the "version now in use among us!"

† These extracts are taken from the Appendix to Bishop Ravenscroft's Sermon, which contains the several articles published in the Register.

It follows as a necessary consequence, that it is derogatory to the Scriptures, as sufficient for their own interpretation, to suppose that any other principle was *just* or useful, which did not disseminate their truths, unaided by a preacher or a commentary.

"They would willingly send the *sacraments* with the word, but as they have not the means," &c. This, truly, is one method of getting rid of a difficulty—a method, for which very few of the Societies' members will thank their skilful advocate; for if they were to send the sacraments with the word, they would constitute, not a Bible, but a Bible and Missionary Society; and it would require a very short time to perceive the practical effects of a promiscuous Missionary Society, made up of all denominations of professing Christians.

The members of Bible Societies, therefore, differ among themselves, with regard to the meaning of their own principles—some contending that the Scriptures need no guide—some asserting that only * one out of twenty diligent inquirers needs an interpreter—and some expressing the opinion, that if they could get the means, the Societies would most certainly send the sacraments, although their fundamental articles forbid the appropriation of their funds to any other purpose than the distribution of the Bible without note or comment.

But, Mr. Editor, although some of the members of the Societies may disclaim the principle imputed to them, the great mass of their advocates do most certainly talk and act as if they maintained it in its fullest extent.—"Christendom (says the third Report of the American Bible Society) has at length discovered one point of *true* re-

ligion, in which all her denominations can unite—the circulation of the Scriptures without note or comment;" and were we to consult the numerous anniversary addresses, in which the public is periodically treated with 'splendid details of Bible Society extensions, with gorgeous declamations of heathen nations furnished with the bread of life, with overwhelming catalogues of the names enlisted, and the millions disbursed for this despotic favourite,' we should find that the burden of the eulogium rested on this 'one point of *TRUE* religion;' we should find that a vast majority of the speakers pointed to the wide circulation of the *un-commented* Scriptures, as the just way, as the *only* efficient method of evangelizing the world. And if some two or three have ventured to strike in a different path, and to recommend the administration of ordinances and the preaching of the word as means of grace, I would respectfully inquire, whether the conduct of these gentlemen, in thus virtually maintaining that the "Scriptures are *not* exclusively sufficient for their own interpretation," is not utterly incompatible with a union in associations, whose very existence depends on the exclusion of ordinances, ministers, and sacraments.*

* "It has been attempted (says Bishop Ravenscroft in his Preface) on former occasions, as well as on the present, to deny the interpretation given to the words, 'without note or comment.' But that it is the only true interpretation, the only practical meaning of the phrase, is evident from the unanimity with which all descriptions of religionists adopt it, and even the enemies of Christianity subscribe to it. It leaves the field free for their respective emissaries, to give their separate and opposite constructions to the *one* faith of the gospel." That this interpretation of the words is, in deed and truth, that of the Societies, the author offers to submit to the following test:—"Let any Bible Society—let the great mother of all, the British and Foreign Bible Society, be convened to decide, which of the various denominations of Christians shall be authorized by them as a body, to interpret the faith, and administer the sacraments of the gospel—yea, to present some single commentator, as a safe guide to the ignorant and unlearned,—and then see whether they can agree. If they can, or if, in the mind of any reasonable man, there is the remotest probability of it—on the contrary, if it does not split them into shivers—then is the author wrong in the view he has taken of it: otherwise, he must retain the meaning he has annexed to the talismanic words, 'without note

* The writer above mentioned, who appears to be the most respectable and gentlemanly of the bishop's opponents, says, that "*nineteen out of twenty* plain unlearned persons, may derive so much of sound doctrine from the Bible as will secure their salvation:" but what becomes of the *twentieth*? Does not this writer speak as 'irreverently of the divine goodness and wisdom,' when he intimates that *any* portion of God's intelligent agents may not derive so much of sound doctrine as will secure their salvation, as those persons do, whose sentiments he is opposing?

Such, then, being the principles, and such the corresponding professions, of the great body of Bible-Society-members, the inquiry naturally suggests itself, whether these principles are valid and authoritative. This is the topic, to the consideration of which Bishop Ravenscroft devotes a large portion of his discourse; and as the author is already known to the readers of the Journal as a prelate of distinguished abilities and sound principles, they will not be displeased with copious extracts from a publication replete, like all his other compositions, with judicious matter, strong expression, and sober and rational piety. The text is taken from Acts viii. 30, 31, where the Evangelist Philip, inquiring of the eunuch whether he understood what he read, received the answer, 'How can I, except some man should guide me;' and in the prosecution of his discourse he proposes to show, that the principle, which I have stated as recognized by Bible Societies, is 'unfounded and dangerous, and ultimately subversive of all revealed religion.' The fallacy of the principle is shown from three considerations:—

"First, from the structure of the Scriptures themselves

"The purpose of revelation being to bring to our knowledge things divine and spiritual, and which otherwise are entirely out of our reach, the language made use of must be appropriate to the subject-matter of the communication, and to our capacity of apprehension. And since there is an infinite disproportion between the things themselves and the capacity of men, the use of figure or metaphor is resorted to, to convey this knowledge. Under the letter of Scripture, therefore, is couched that spiritual meaning and application which constitutes their value and importance to us as saving truth. Hence we find, that while the preceptive parts of revelation are plain and perspicuous, so as to be immediately apprehended, those which are doctrinal partake of different degrees of clearness, according to the na-

ture of the doctrine inculcated: and those which are mysterious, are clothed in an obscurity which even 'the angels desire to look into.' Yet are they all made the subject-matter of our faith and obedience, and operative, according to our diligence, in preparing us for still higher and brighter spiritual attainments. Unless, therefore, it can be made out, that the mysterious and obscure parts of revelation can be safely and truly interpreted by those which are clear, (for that is the amount of the principle acted upon as fundamental by the Bible Societies in question,) the very structure of the Scriptures shows the fallacy of the proposition. On this point, which is of great importance to a just view of the subject, and, I presume, new to many of you, the observations of a prelate of high character for ability and piety [Bishop Jebb] are so clear and convincing, that I shall lay them before you in his own words.

"The principle (says this writer) of explaining those parts of Scripture which appear more obscure, by those which are manifest and clear, involves a very serious inconvenience. It is obvious, that, in the sacred word, different degrees of clearness and obscurity can have arisen only from the various nature of the subject-matter. In promulgating a design so vast, comprehensive, and profound, as the design of Christianity, what St. Paul terms the deep things of God, must frequently come into view. In every enunciation of these great mysteries, an awful obscurity must unquestionably overhang the subject: still, however, all the instances may not be equally inaccessible: some may reward research, though others may baffle investigation. But if passages of obvious plainness are to limit the import of profounder passages, it is manifest, that all profounder passages must be, at least, comparatively, and in many cases totally neglected. On the assumption that the profounder and the plainer language refer to the same subject, and express the same, or nearly the same idea, it would be difficult perhaps to defend the wisdom, and sometimes even the humanity of the Holy Spirit, who indited the Scriptures; for why employ dark and doubtful sayings, where obvious and familiar sayings would have answered every reasonable purpose? But the fact is far otherwise. Simple truths are simply expressed, majestic truths are clothed in appropriate majesty of language, and mysterious truths are invested with that sacred veil which they alone may venture to penetrate, who are at once illuminated by Christian grace, animated by Christian love, and regulated by Christian humility.* Such spirits are invited and expected to search out the wonders

or comment.' Let the North-Carolina Bible Society try it at their next general meeting, and thus prove or disprove what this enemy to Bible Societies has had the temerity to call in question. This will refute the Sermon better than all the railings of men, who vainly think that the truth of God is the creature of human opinion, and to take its character from the fluctuations of such a standard. If theirs is the truth of this controversy, let them meet this ordeal.

* [Christian learning being presumed.]

of God's word, no less than the works of his creation. But what an obstacle will be opposed to their researches, what a bar to their spiritual improvement, if the highest truths are to be measured by the lowest standard—if the depths are to be sounded with a plummet which can scarcely reach the bottom of the shallows?"—

"But a still more serious consequence may be dreaded. The clearer passages of Scripture will, in general, be those which recognize principles deducible from nature and Providence; and by parity of reason, the obscurer passages will commonly be those in which pure matter of revelation is promulgated. If, therefore, it be adopted as the leading principle of interpretation, that the sense of this latter class of passages should be limited or settled by the sense of the former class, it may be reckoned upon, that, through the continual-application of this rule, the appropriate and peculiar truths of revelation will gradually be absorbed in mere natural verities."—"The question may now be asked, have not these consequences been actually realized? Is it not but too certain, that a diminishing scale of interpretation detracts from the fulness of Christian belief; and that, where the less appropriate and peculiar parts of revelation are made the limits of all the rest, the system commonly terminates in Socinianism; perhaps in something, if possible, more removed from the semblance of Christianity?"

"Thus writes the present bishop of Limerick, not on the subject of Bible Societies, but upon the principle which distinguishes the British from the reformed continental Churches: and it is for the observation and experience of those who now hear me, to apply the reasoning, and to consider, whether similar effects are not following to us, and whether, upon the whole, the reverence due to the Bible, as the word of God, is not declining, under the operation of this unwise and unwarranted assumption.

"But it may be said, since the canon of Scripture is complete, and admitted by all to be in itself sufficient for every Christian purpose, what more can be needed? To this it is replied by a Christian Father of the fifth century, '*that from the very depth of holy Scripture, all men cannot receive it in one and the same sense. One person interprets the divine oracles in one manner: another person in a manner totally different: inasmuch, that from the same source, almost as many opinions may be elicited as there are men. Therefore amidst so great perplexity, of such various error, it is extremely necessary that the line of prophetic and apostolic interpretation be regulated by the standard of ecclesiastical and catholic judgment.*'

"To close this head of my discourse, I

would observe, that if the foregoing arguments needed any confirmation, it is to be found in the order pursued by the divine wisdom, in making known his will to his creatures. Under each dispensation of his grace, the revelation made has been accompanied by authorized and accredited interpreters and administrators of spiritual things. In no case is the *word of God disjoined from the Church of God*, the grace of God from the sacraments of the Church, and the end proposed and promised separated from the means provided and commanded. All of which the *present system* keeps entirely out of view; and is, therefore, so far at variance with the wisdom of God."

Our author, under his second head, contends that the fallacy of the principle 'is evidenced by the condition of man as a fallen creature?' but as he is not quite as full and explicit on this as on other points, and moreover, is possibly liable to some misconception, I shall take the liberty of stating his argument in a different form, at the same time adding one or two illustrations from Scripture. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. His tendency and disposition have always been to corrupt revelation, and his carnal propensities are entirely averse to the performance of its hallowed precepts. If every person, coming into the world with these dispositions and propensities, is supposed, according to the present hypothesis, to be able to understand the Scriptures and 'spiritual things,' whether he be influenced by the Spirit of God or not; it follows, that the authoritative expositions of the natural man and the renewed man are equally binding; and further, that a system of doctrines drawn up by any individual whose prejudices may lead him to mutilate revelation, is of as great importance and authority as the combined wisdom of the *Church universal*, which God, *foreseeing the depravity and waywardness of man*, has separated from the world as a '*depository, a guardian, and a witness, of the truth.*'* The Apostle Peter pre-

* "The necessity and importance of Creeds, &c. (says Dr. Miller in his Lecture) appear from the consideration that one great design of establishing a Church in our world was, that she might be, in all ages, a depository, a guardian, and a witness, of the truth." I must caution my readers against drawing any infer-

dicted that *false teachers* would arise, who would privily bring in damnable heresies; who (to use the language of our Saviour) 'would deceive, if possible, the very elect;' although every man were placed in their power, of obtaining a knowledge of the truth. The same Apostle tells us, that in St. Paul's epistles 'there are some things hard to be understood, which they that are UNLEARNED and UNSTABLE wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.' He therefore warns his beloved hearers, whom he had addressed as 'elect,' as 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,' to 'beware lest they also should be led away with the error of the wicked.' (See 1 Pet. i. 2; ii. 9; and 2 Pet. ii. 1; iii. 15, 16; and Matt. xxiv. 24.) Unless, then, "it can be shown, that it is a matter of perfect indifference, what system of religious opinions we draw from the Bible, the condition of man as a *fallen creature*, in connexion with the structure of the Scriptures, is yet further in opposition to the principle in question."

"Thirdly, from the agency of the Holy Spirit in giving effect to the word of God, the principle under consideration is shown to be erroneous, dangerous, and eventually destructive of all revealed religion.

"No doctrine of Christianity is more firmly established than that of the exclusive necessity of spiritual illumination, to a right understanding and application of the Scriptures; and it is equally sure that the Holy Spirit is given, to lead us into all needful truth. Is it thence to be assumed, however, that the simple volume is necessarily accompanied by the Spirit of God; and that every impression made on the mind of the reader of that volume, is the witness of the Spirit to the truth and certainty of the interpretation he comes to? Have we any warrant, from what is revealed to us, of the connexion of spiritual influence with the written word of God,

ences which Dr. Miller's words will not clearly justify. My only object in introducing this quotation is to show, that if Presbyterians, those bitter foes of Popery, hold such language as this, Episcopalians cannot be accused of a tendency to Romish errors, when they maintain that the primitive doctrines of the '*Church Catholic*' (which was in existence long before the *Roman Catholic Church*) have the strongest pretensions to scriptural authority and divine revelation.

to believe that such is the agency of the Holy Ghost upon uninspired men? Yet such is the unavoidable extent to which the favourite principle of this and other Bible Societies carries the essential doctrine of spiritual influence."

According to this principle, says our author, the Bible is its own interpreter—the Bible is to be exclusively interpreted from itself: and according to the universally received doctrine of the Scriptures, the operation of the Holy Ghost is *indispensably necessary* to a saving knowledge and application of divine truth. Taking both to be true, it follows that the effect produced through the word of God read, must be received as the *immediate* dictate of the Spirit, by the person under its influence, and indeed by all others.

"This, it appears to me, is the unavoidable conclusion, assuming the principle to be founded. Whether it is intended to be carried this far, may reasonably be doubted: but whether intended or not, an awful responsibility is incurred, by sanctioning so dangerous a position on a subject of such vital interest, by such an imposing weight of character as Europe and America have leagued in its favour.

"With whatever intention, however, a more erroneous notion could not be suggested: for it goes the whole length of making every man's private imagination the test to him of saving truth; and sanctions the destructive, but prevailing notion, that the discordant and opposite views of Christian faith and practice, which deform the gospel, have all alike the witness of the Spirit of God, that they are the truths of God, and equally to be relied on for salvation. But is such the doctrine of the religion we profess? Is the hope given to man, by the revelation of Jesus Christ, built upon so sandy a foundation? Are its fundamental doctrines, wise directions, and bright examples, of so vague and indeterminate a character, as to give countenance to so broad a delusion? I ask Christian men—I ask men who stand forward as Christian teachers—I ask men who say they reverence the Bible, and wish to present it as the best of all gifts to their fellow-men; and I beseech them to meet the question, not under the influence of assaulted feeling, not under the calculations of party interests, but under the solemn influence of that account which we must all give in to God; in particular, I entreat those who are capable of embracing the argument in its extent, who are competent to try its truth and soundness, to reflect that they owe to others who are not so gifted, the

benefit of their counsel and example: and that, however popular an error may be, it is not therefore the less, but the more injurious, and demands the united efforts of the wise and good to counteract its effects. In the case before us, it appears to your preacher, that the best interests of pure and undefiled religion are at stake; that they are compromised on grounds most difficult to meet, because ostensibly fortified with zeal for the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. Yet there is a zeal without knowledge, which is to be guarded against; and the surest guard must for ever be a close adherence to that system of *divine truth* and *prescribed ministrations*, which God hath *indissolubly* joined together, for the assurance of faith to man, in the hope of the gospel." P. 12, 13

I think, Mr. Editor, that it must be manifest to such of your readers as are disposed to examine for themselves, that a large proportion of the supporters of Bible Societies do maintain the principles which I have stated to be the bond of their union; and I think that they will agree with the writer whom I have quoted, that these principles are dangerous, and, if carried to their legitimate consequences, are 'subversive of all true religion.' But it has been said, that although men may speak and act on these principles in their capacity as Bible Society members, in order to prevent a division of effort,* yet that, inasmuch as in their individual capacity, and in their capacity as Church members, they exert themselves to spread their several confessions and creeds, and to provide numerous missionaries, the Society is not accountable for the consequences which may result from the indiscretion of a few of its members, who withhold the means which are necessary for the increase of these missionaries and the circulation of these creeds.

To this I reply, that the Society is accountable for all the injurious effects which have resulted, and which will continue to result, from a reasonable construction of its acknowledged principles: the Society is responsible in a great measure for "that miserable in-

difference to articles of faith, (I use the words of Dr. Miller,) which is so replete with mischief to every Christian community in which it is found"—for that utter contempt of 'distinctive religious views,' which prevails to an alarming extent throughout our land, and the effects of which our Presbyterian brethren are now striving to resist. And I reply farther, that when men support different principles in different religious capacities, (one principle as Bible Society members, and another as Church members,) their consistency (to say nothing more) may reasonably be called in question; and more especially may *their* consistency be questioned, who contend for the principles of the American Bible Society, while their own records afford abundant evidence, that, as members of the Society, they do not act in conformity to these professed principles.

That the American Bible Society, instead of adhering to the principle of its organization, has proved to be virtually, at least in part, a *Missionary Association*, was the second point proposed for examination; and in stating the evidence on which I ground my assertion, it will not be necessary to adduce the numerous tracts and speeches which monthly issue from the several depositories;* but I shall refer to official

* 'Corrector' has given a specimen of the comments which were delivered at the anniversary in 1823. Should the readers of the Journal desire to see further specimens, they are referred to the Hon. Mr. Daggett's Address, of May, 1824, which may be entitled, "A Running Commentary on all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments." This gentleman, speaking of the opposition to the Societies, asks—"Where is the proof that the study of this Book of all books has tended to corrupt one heart, &c.?" And another speaker warmly exhorts his brethren to send it without note or comment, for "its cardinal truths are easy of apprehension: it is only to read to understand." To which I will only oppose the opinion of St. Peter, that some *unlearned* and *unstable* persons MAY wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. The Rev. President of Yale College, at the same meeting, used this emphatic language:—"Amidst the endless variety of opinions with which I am surrounded, how am I to fix upon a creed which I may know to be right? The discoveries of science will not reveal the secret. The researches and acquisitions of literature will not settle the question. The decisions of councils, of synods, of learned expositors, may only serve to confirm me in error. I can have no ground of safety but in

* The first obvious consequence' of Bible and Prayer Book Societies, (says 'A Churchman,' &c. p. 56,) is the *division of effort* in the Bible cause. The same argument would hold against all separate *Missionary Associations*.

documents, drawn up with care and attention, and placed among the records of the Society, as lasting memorials of its progress and its efficiency.

The constitution of the Society declares that its "*sole object shall be, to encourage a wider circulation of the holy Scriptures without note or comment.*" How far this declaration agrees with the Society's proceedings, will be perceived by the following extracts from its reports:—

"The missionaries of the United Brethren, or Moravians, have, many years since, opened a door for the introduction of the Scriptures among the Indians on our borders."—"Accordingly one hundred and forty copies of the Epistles in the Delaware tongue, were transmitted to the Rev. Mr. Leukenback, in the state of Ohio, to be distributed among the Indians under his pastoral care, and such others as may be within his reach." Three hun-

appealing to the simple word of God." To all this, it seems to me, that his reverend brother, the professor in Princeton, gives a sufficient reply, (Lecture, p. 11.) "that although the Scriptures are undoubtedly simple and plain, so plain that he who runs may read; yet it is equally certain, that thousands do, in fact, mistake and misinterpret them. This cannot possibly be denied; because thousands interpret them, and that on points confessedly fundamental, not only in different, but in directly opposite ways: of course, all cannot be equally right." "As the world is acknowledged, on all hands, to be, in fact, full of mistake and error as to the true meaning of the holy Scriptures, can it be thought a superfluous task for those who have more light and more correct opinions, to hold them to view as a testimony to the truth, and as a guide to such as may be in error?" The 'decisions of councils, &c.' it is true, 'may serve to confirm us in error;' but can we not safely refer to a time before councils were in existence, to a time when, as Vincent of Lerins observed, the same doctrines were held *semper, ubique, ab omnibus*? The opinions of the first and second centuries are confidently appealed to by all the orthodox, as the best commentary on the Scriptures with regard to our Lord's divinity; and we naturally cite the unanimous declarations of the primitive fathers as conclusive and demonstrative evidence on the observance of certain rites and ordinances, which, although fairly deducible from the Bible, are not expressly enjoined; such as the consecration of the first day of the week to religious exercises, the baptism of infants, the admission of females to the Lord's supper, &c. And is it unreasonable, that, on other points of equal, if not of greater magnitude, the same authority should be referred to, to settle differences, where we are liable to be 'carried about by every wind of doctrine'?

dred copies of John's Epistles were also sent to Mr. Dencke, in Upper Canada, which "Mr. Dencke distributed in his church." (*Third Report.*)—Here we learn that the Society had been informed of a 'door of entrance' which had been opened to the Indians, and that a number of the Epistles were immediately sent to be distributed by the missionaries. And does the Society really suppose that Mr. Dencke and Mr. Leukenback distributed these Epistles among tribes bordering on barbarism, without putting any comment upon them? No; the members of the Society must have expected that the missionaries would explain these Epistles to the Indians; and (unless we admit the improbable supposition, that they countenance the ministrations of men whose characters and principles were unknown) they must have had such confidence in them, that all without exception, from the Supralapsarian down to the Unitarian, could agree with their expositions! Let it not be thought from these remarks, that the conduct of the missionaries is by any means disapproved of. As far as I have learned, they were faithful and exemplary men; and did the Bible Society employ, or was it the means of getting employment, for such men merely as belong to the respectable and apostolic society of the Moravians, we should not have much occasion for finding fault. But the design of the foregoing observations is to show, that in the proceedings of the Society there is a virtual acknowledgment of the truth of the sentiment, that the preaching of the Gospel is the scriptural plan of evangelizing the world; and that the Scriptures ordinarily will have little effect among the rude, uncultivated heathens, unless "missionaries open the door for the introduction of the Gospel."*

* There is a trifling difference on this subject, between the sentiments of the managers of the Society and those of its speakers and advocates. The former, in the above quotation, affirm that the "Missionaries open a door for the introduction of the Scriptures." The Rev. Mr. Henshaw, on the contrary, (speaking at the seventh anniversary,) declares that "the Bible Society prepares the way for the operations of the Missionary Society;" that "the

To proceed with further extracts:—

"Great difficulties have been experienced in putting the Indian Scriptures into circulation, particularly the Mohawk; of which it will be seen very few have been issued, and those chiefly by way of experiment."—"Two hundred and fifty of the Epistles of St. John in Delaware, and thirty of the Gospel of St. John in Mohawk, have been delivered to the Rev. Mr. Mortimer, for distribution among Indians of those nations by the missionaries of the United Brethren; and twenty-four copies of the latter to the Rev. Mr. Crane, a missionary among the Tuscarora Indians in the state of New-York, for distribution among the members of his congregation and other Indians understanding that language."—"At present it is to be lamented that but few of the Indians can read."—*Fourth Report.*

"The Board having recently been informed that the *Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America* were about sending *two missionaries* to the Floridas, have placed at their disposal for distribution, 50 French and 50 English Bibles, and 200 Spanish and 100 English Testaments.

"The managers having been informed that a [congregational] missionary was about to proceed from Boston to the Sandwich Islands, in the Pacific Ocean, under the direction of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,—presented that respectable body with a donation of 200 Bibles and 100 Testaments, to be distributed by their missionaries among the Americans and Europeans resident at and frequenting those islands."—"They have also, on the application of the committee of that Board, made them a grant of 200 Bibles and 200 Testaments, for distribution by their [congregational] missionaries in the island of Ceylon."—(*Fourth Report*, p. 16, 17.)

"During the past year, the managers have granted 1000 dollars to the Rev. Dr. Carey and his associates at Serampore, to be applied by them towards defraying the expense of translating and printing the Scriptures in the various languages of India. Another grant of 500 dollars has been made to the missionaries of the American

Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in the island of Ceylon, to be employed by them in the purchase of Scriptures in the Tamul language, for distribution in that island."—(*Seventh Report*, p. 13.)

"The Spanish Bible, in the version *approved by the Roman Catholics*, is preparing" for the Spaniards in America—(*Seventh Report*, p. 26.)

"The managers have been assured, that in one place (in South-America) the Testaments were received as a most acceptable gift by a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic, and that he proceeded immediately to a judicious distribution of them, &c."

From these passages we derive this interesting information:—

1. That difficulties have arisen in circulating the Indian Scriptures, on account of the ignorance of many, who are not able to read.

2. That the missionaries of the Moravians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Roman Catholics, equally enjoy the favour and protection of the Society; and that the Bibles issued to these several missionaries, are to be distributed by them, as each thinks proper.

3. That the Society circulates such versions as are *approved of by the different missionaries*, without having any control over the translations.

Here then is as satisfactory proof as can be desired, that in the opinion of the Society, missionaries must be employed to teach the doctrines and precepts of the Bible to the ignorant; and here is conclusive evidence, that, although the Society does not actually pay for *missionary duty*, it contributes to the support of these missionaries; and thus encourages in the prosecution of their work, men who hold as dissimilar sentiments as those of the Roman Catholics, Baptists, Methodists; &c.

It may be said in reply to this, that the Society puts its Scriptures, without note or comment, into the hands of those who succeed best in distributing them; and after that it can have no control over them, but the distributors may give what comment they please. But to place this subject in its true light, let us suppose that a Missionary Society, having some surplus funds at its disposal, appropriates them to the purchase of Bibles, and then sends out its

circulation of the Scriptures must be *followed* by the preaching of the gospel from the lips of *living teachers*, &c. "A Churchman of the Diocese of New-York," also, writing on the same subject, seems to differ in *language* from the managers: at page 56 of his first Letter he maintains, that those who spread the Scriptures, "*prepare the way for Missionaries, Churches, &c.*" Of the two plans under consideration, I should much prefer that supported by the accredited agents of the Society, at the same time confessing that if Bibles and authorized missionaries were to *go together*, the effect would ordinarily be much greater.

missionaries with the expectation that they will put that construction upon the Bible which is sanctioned by their particular creed; what is the difference in the results of the proceedings of the two societies? Not a particle, not the slightest shade of difference; and yet the Bible Society informs us, that "as the proceedings are public, it is impossible to *wander from the object of the institution* without its being known; and such a departure, when known, would be a *death-blow* to the Society."—(*Seventh Report*, p. 40.)

Again; from the foregoing extracts it appears that the Society employs certain missionaries to make translations for the heathen nations: but to whom are the translators accountable? To the Society? The Society holds its meetings many thousand miles off; and even if it held its meetings at Serampore, Dr. Carey and his associates would not be assisted by the councils or *exegesis* of such a promiscuous assembly. If, as the Society already knows to be the fact, some versions 'are not sufficiently accurate,* where is the power of redress? As a body, the members cannot determine upon the propriety of the translation, and must therefore depend on the judgment of a few learned men, taken from different sects. If one of these learned men happen to be a Socinian, he of course will prefer the interpretation and translation of *Priestley* or *Wakefield*, or peradventure, if he be an *Ultra*, the results of the twenty years' labour of *Mr. Belsham*. Should another chance to be a Methodist, the notes of John Wesley and Adam Clarke will give him the clearest insight into difficult passages. Is a Presbyterian or a Roman Catholic joined to them? He will follow a different standard from both, and regulate his translation accordingly. The Church of England,

after her firm establishment, was deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of a translation for the use of those who spoke the English language; and when the design was once formed, she did not venture upon it unadvisedly or without preparation—she did not entrust it to one or to half a dozen of her members, but, with the utmost circumspection and care, committed it to a large body of her most able, respectable, and learned divines, who, for the most part, were united in sentiment. She maintained (as does her daughter, the Episcopal Church of America, Article 20) that the "Church is a witness and keeper of holy writ," and therefore could not with propriety or consistency countenance any translations which had not the sanction of the "Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church," the "*depository, guardian, and witness, of the truth.*"

The above notices of the *actual operation* of Bible Societies, are a part of an overwhelming body of evidence that those Societies neither *are* nor *can be* what they profess to be. They neither *do* nor *can* distribute the Scriptures without note or comment. They may *print* them without note or comment; but the instant they get into *circulation*, notes and comments multiply thickly around them; and these, directly or indirectly, with the encouragement, and under the authority, of the Bible Societies themselves. Sermons, speeches, letters, reports, &c. &c. distributed by these Societies, furnish notes and comments in any quantity, and in every variety. Reverend agents, sent to organize auxiliaries, collect funds, &c. in all parts of the country, are, while in the employment of Bible Societies, supported by their funds, and possessing the powerful influence of their respectable name, perpetually preaching such comments as to them appear the best. Missionaries devoted to the propagation of every wind of doctrine, preaching Popery, Antipædobaptism, Universalism, Unitarianism, Calvinism, &c. &c. &c. have their hands strengthened, and their influence increased, by being furnished with Bibles for distribution, as explained and accommodated by their

* See the sixth Report. p. 17, where the managers state that the issue of the Gospel of St. John in Mohawk was suspended, from the fear that it was not sufficiently accurate. Some mistakes in Oriental translations are mentioned in the English publications, one of which I quote from memory. Instead of '*Judge not, that ye be not judged,*' the translation is, "*It's not justice, that ye may not have justice done to you.*"

own peculiar views. Popish translations (which, if we may judge by the Doway Bible, contain not a few most erroneous notes and comments worked up into a peculiar rendering of the text) are avowedly circulated.* Individuals are encouraged in translating the Scriptures, a work which may be made so easy a mean of gaining currency to any peculiar views, and which, therefore, our Church has ever thought to require the most laboured exertions, and the most scrutinizing collations, of the united wisdom of her ablest doctors.

Such, then, being the honest matter of fact; it being indeed true that Bible Societies do and must distribute notes and comments; and it necessarily following, that these will generally be in accordance with the peculiar views of the majority of those who furnish them; a serious consideration presents itself to Episcopalians. In the course of Providence, we are a little body compared with those who, in the various other communions, hold sentiments opposed to what are contained in our standards, and what we believe to be the pure doctrines of the Gospel. Proportionably small, therefore, must be our agency in supplying and circulating Bible Society

notes and comments. Of any amount, therefore, of contribution which a member of our Church makes to a Bible Society, three-fifths, nine-tenths, nineteen-twentieths, and perhaps a still greater proportion, goes to the dissemination of notes and comments inconsistent with the principles of his own Church, which he believes to be the genuine principles of the Bible, and not unfrequently directly and strongly in opposition to them; whereas the same amount given to the institutions of that Church, would all go to the promotion of pure, primitive, and evangelical religion—of the true Bible cause. Can, then, an Episcopalian doubt of the choice that he should make, and of the channel through which his pious benevolence should flow, if he wishes that it should produce the greatest good? Can men who maintain with Hooker, as he did with all primitive antiquity, that '*ecclesia est in Episcopo*,'* whose daily prayer is offered to the throne of grace, that they may be delivered "from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism"—can they, with any show of reason or consistency, patronize societies which manifestly have a tendency to destroy all ecclesiastical order, and to sanction the most pernicious heresies? Impossible! Yet these very men are pointed at with the finger of scorn; and exposed to public derision, because they refuse to join heart and hand in this grand and sublime scheme of evangelizing the world, and of promoting union, harmony, and love, among the numerous sects of professing Christians!† Lest, however, I should be thought to have

* Do these popish translations contain the Apocrypha? If so: Bible Societies are circulating, as a part of the Bible, what Protestants do not acknowledge as such. If not; the case still affords one among ten thousand proofs, that these promiscuous religious associations must necessarily be inconsistent with themselves; founded upon assumed principles which are utterly impracticable; and tending only to strengthen the sectarian and distinctive views which characterize the majority of their members. A very large part of the Christian world holds the Apocrypha to be of equal authority with the books which Protestants acknowledge to be canonical; and consequently believes any Bible, without the Apocrypha, to be an imperfect and mutilated portion of Scripture. The Bible Societies, professing to be founded on principles common to all Christians, refuse to distribute what probably one half of the Christian world considers as a part of the word of God. But Protestants bear the away in these Societies, and of course conduct them so as to answer their own purposes. This is perfectly natural; and would be perfectly right, if it were accompanied with the candid and honest avowal that their views are sectarian;† and the consistent renunciation of the much-boasted, but impracticable, principle of meeting on ground common to all Christians.

† I use the word in its present ordinary acceptation, as referring to any *portion*, instead of the *whole body*, of professing Christians.

* The outward being of a church consists in the having of a bishop.

† Dr. Miller (p. 11 of Lecture) has some good remarks on the utility of creeds to promote unity among Christians. Let us substitute the word *society* for *Church*, and the word *speakers* for *worshippers*, and we shall read as follows:—"How is any Church (society) to guard itself from that baneful discord, that perpetual strife of feeling, if not of words and conduct, which must ensue when it is made up of such heterogeneous materials," "as a body of worshippers (speakers,) composed of Calvinists, Arminians, Pelagians, Arians, and Socinians? Nay, how is a Church (society) to avoid the guilt of harbouring in its bosom, and of countenancing by its fellowship, the worst heresies that ever disgraced the Christian name?"

taken too high or exclusive ground—lest I should be supposed to have given the sentiments of individuals rather than of the Church, I shall refer to the *standards* of the Church, to show what were the opinions of her reformers with regard to ministry and discipline, and what she requires of those members who profess to believe in her articles and to submit to her authority. This I shall do with the more readiness, as many persons seem to be entirely ignorant of the doctrines of their own communion, and consequently are apt to impute the strictness and consistency of their brethren to a bigoted and narrow-minded disposition.

The marks of a true Church our reformers have stated clearly in the nineteenth Article, in the following words:—"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, (*fidelium, believers in Christianity*) in the which the *pure word of God is preached,** and the *sacraments be duly administered* according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." Wherever, then, the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly and lawfully administered, there we may be assured that the Church of Christ exists in its true and genuine character.

The question next arises, how we are to know that these characteristics of a Church exist in any portion of the Christian world. To this the framers of our Articles reply, that those who profess to preach the word, and to administer the sacraments, must first be lawfully called and sent; and that no person, however pious or gifted he may be, has any right to perform these religious offices, unless he be called and sent by men deriving their authority in a regular succession from the Apostles' times. The twenty-third and thirty-

sixth Articles, and the Ordinal referred to by the latter, declare these sentiments in a very explicit and forcible manner.

"It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of *public preaching*, or *ministering the sacraments* in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be called and chosen to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation (*ecclesia, Church,*) to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."—"The Book of Consecration of Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, as set forth by the General Convention of this Church in 1792, doth contain all things necessary to such consecration and ordering: neither hath it any thing that of itself is superstitious and ungodly; and therefore, whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to said form, we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered."

The following is the preface to the Ordinal referred to in the last article:

"It is evident unto all men, diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church,—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority. And therefore, to the intent that these orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed in this Church, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful bishop, priest, or deacon, in this Church, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had Episcopal consecration or ordination."

CATHOLICUS.

P. S. Much controversy has arisen at the South, in consequence of the delivery of the Sermon of Bishop Ravenscroft, from which extracts have been made in the foregoing communication, and much misrepresentation, as is usual on such occasions, has been circulated respecting its real sentiments. For the information, therefore, of those who have not the opportunity

† The 'Churchman of New-York' (Letter I. p. 13) says that the opponents of the American Bible Society separate the Church from the word of God, because the Church is prohibited by them from enjoying the benefits of the word; and in order to show what he understands by the Church, he quotes the *first* part of the above article; fairness required him to quote the whole of the sentence, which asserts not only that the pure word must be preached, but also that the sacraments must be *duly* administered.

of seeing the Sermon, it is proper to give a short view of the circumstances which led to its publication.

A few days after its delivery, the Editor of the Raleigh Register took the liberty of giving his opinions to the world on a question entirely foreign from the duties of his vocation as a newspaper editor, and not unlike some editors at the North, in similar circumstances, misstated the very point on which his opponent was most explicit. Although he afterwards *disclaimed* any intention of misrepresentation, I cannot but think that the sentence in which he makes this declaration, is followed by the very same misrepresentation in other words, to wit, that Bishop Ravenscroft maintains that the "distribution of the Bible without note or comment," in all cases whatever, has an "evil tendency;" and I cannot but think with Bishop Ravenscroft (in his *preface*), "that no more striking proof can be desired of the injurious effect of the principle [contended for] upon religion at large, in lowering the importance of the Bible, lessening the effect due to the sacraments, and encouraging the infidel notions exposed in the body of the Sermon, than the sentiments expressed" in this 'newspaper publication.'

"The bishop (says the editor) did not, as is usual on such occasions, speak favourably of the institution for which he had been invited to preach, but took an opposite direction, denouncing Bible Societies in general, as calculated to produce injurious effects on pure Christianity, as, without a teacher, the people at large could not read the Bible to advantage; and that distributing the Bible without comment, would tend only to increase that diversity of religious opinion which was already a great evil. We cannot agree with the learned bishop in this opinion, nor do we believe its correctness will be admitted by the people of this country. We have always believed, that though the Scriptures contain many things hard to be understood, yet that there is sufficient in them which is plain and intelligible to the meanest capacity, to produce the best effects on the life and character; and sufficient, even without a guide, to teach men their duty to God and their fellow-men. Nor do we consider the *diversity of opinion* among men on the subject of religion as an evil to be lamented. *All that is necessary* to produce happiness under such circum-

stances is, that men should think charitably of each other, and agree to differ, believing that every one who *professes* himself to be guided by the principles of the Gospel, and *leads a good life*, is *sincere* in his profession, and will hereafter be approved by his Maker."

To this the bishop made the following reply:—

"Bishop Ravenscroft presents his respectful compliments to Mr. Gales, and as he is persuaded that no misrepresentation was *intended*, he feels assured that Mr. Gales will feel no difficulty in correcting that contained in the Editorial Notice of the Sermon preached by the bishop before the North-Carolina Bible Society, which appeared in yesterday's Register.

"The bishop did, in no shape or sense, *denounce* Bible Societies in general: on the contrary, knowing how liable he is to be misrepresented, he took some pains to impress a different persuasion. His object was, (and it is expressed in accordance therewith throughout the whole discourse,) to demonstrate the erroneous and dangerous nature of the principle adopted by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and copied into the constitution of that of North-Carolina, and many others; viz. that the distribution of the Scriptures, without note or comment, is the *only just principle* on which to disseminate divine truth. This principle the bishop showed to be the *only practical meaning* of the constitutional article in question; as he also endeavoured to do, that it was *ultimately subversive of all revealed religion*, inasmuch as it *separated the religion of the Gospel from the sacraments of the Gospel*; contravened the order and course of the divine wisdom in the revelation of himself to his creatures; and went to establish the *infidel*, but prevailing notion, that it matters not what a man's faith is, so that he is *sincere*, and *leads a moral life*.

"Whether the people of this state will agree with the bishop in the antichristian tendency of such principles, he does not pretend to know: certainly they will not, so long as they are kept dozing under the lullaby of *anniversary eulogiums* on such principles, while the principles themselves are artfully covered up under the veil of a *spurious charity*. He will, however, hope for better things from them, and even from the writer of the editorial article in question.

"Raleigh, December 15, 1824."

Immediately after the publication of this note, the bishop was attacked by several anonymous scribblers, some of whom attempted to accomplish by wit what they could not effect by argu-

ment. In their comparisons, however, they appear to have been somewhat unfortunate. One gentleman refers to the controversies which have taken place in England and New-York, and to the triumphant defences of the Christian Observer, and of the Churchman of the Diocese of New-York, without knowing, probably, that all the efforts of the former have not yet been able to induce more than ten out of fifty-five of the present bishops to join the British and Foreign Bible Society; and that the repeated attacks of the latter have resulted only in chagrin and disappointment. Another correspondent thinks that the remark of Festus to Paul may be applied to Bishop Ravenscroft—'Much learning doth make thee mad;' with which compliment the bishop must feel highly gratified, more especially as he can conscientiously reply with the Apostle—'*I speak forth the words of truth and soberness.*' It was not thought necessary to notice these publications, except on two points, which involved the bishop's character for candour, and for a proper respect to the gentlemen who had formerly preached before the Society. To the latter he states that he is perfectly willing to satisfy the writer, who professes to be one of the preachers of the Society, if he will throw off the mask of an anonymous assailant. To the former, the following open and candid reply is made, which I think is a sufficient justification of his conduct in "omitting to inform the managers of the Society explicitly respecting his views," previously to the delivery of the discourse:—

"The publication in the last Register (Dec. 21) having changed in some degree the ground of complaint on the subject of my Sermon, &c. I think it respectful to the public to state the simple fact, that the thought how far it would be candid to preach such a sermon as I could in conscience preach, without previously notifying them of its tendency, never entered my mind. If I have erred in this respect, therefore, it is from inadvertence, and I must take such blame as the friends of the Society choose to lay upon me: and I prefer this course to sheltering myself under any subterfuge whatever; though I might say, that it was certainly incumbent on the managers to take care who they selected for this purpose, it not being a ne-

cessary consequence that every minister of religion was bound to think with the North-Carolina Bible Society. Whether, as a body, they knew any thing of my sentiments on such subjects, may very properly be doubted; but, individually, as members and managers, and residing in this place, some of them might have known them, as they have never been kept back in conversation. The necessary connexion also of these sentiments with my known and declared principles on other ecclesiastical points of difference, could have escaped no reflecting mind."

The bishop concludes with observing, that a *refusal* on his part, and *on such grounds*, at the short interval between the invitation and the meeting of the Society, 'would have given *ampler* ground for misrepresentation of all sorts:' to prevent, therefore, all further disputes, he resolves to publish the Sermon.

For the Christian Journal.

No. VII.

REVIEW of the proposed Additions to the HYMNS.

WE resume our undertaking with the remainder of the series of hymns classed under the general title of *The Christian Life*. Ten of them were reviewed in our last; there are six more. To these and eleven others, we devote the present number. And there will remain an equal number for our next, which will be the last.

Hymn LXXV.—Cowper.

Mysterious Providences.

- 1 God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.
- 2 Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sov'reign will.
- 3 Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.
- 4 Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.
- 5 His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour:
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flow'r.
- 6 Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

The last two verses appear to favour the practice of interpreting providences: it is true, *God* is called the interpreter; but it is intimated that he "will make it plain" to men, at least to good men,—that they will see his "purposes ripening fast." This, as it will be currently understood, is a mistake. The best, and perhaps only sound interpretation of severe providences, is this, "the Lord loveth whom he chasteneth;" and to seek any farther penetration into them is futile, and may be dangerous or even impious. We must urge therefore the expunging of the 5th and 6th verses, certainly the final one.—The rest of the hymn is correct in matter.—But we would vary the title. Is there not as much "mystery" in the grant of *kind* providences to fallen beings, as in the infliction of *severe* ones? Or what mystery can remain, when we are expressly assured that "if we endure chastening God dealeth with us as with sons"? We would change the title to "Severe Providences"

The next is from the same author.

Hymn LXXVI.—Cowper.—Trials.

- 1 'Tis my happiness below,
Not to live without the cross;
But the Saviour's pow'r to know,
Sanctifying every loss.
- 2 Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscrib'd upon them all—
This is happiness to me.
- 3 Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way,
Might I not with reason fear
I should prove a cast-away?
- 4 Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer,
Bring me to my Saviour's feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.

Sound in matter; but inferior in every other respect.

Hymn LXXVII.—Mrs. Steele.

All our works of God.

- 1 Father, to thee my soul I lift,
On thee my hope depends,
Convinc'd that every perfect gift
From thee alone descends.
- 2 Mercy and grace are thine alone,
And pow'r and wisdom too;
Without the Spirit of thy Son
We nothing good can do.
- 3 We cannot speak one useful word,
One holy thought conceive,
Unless, in answer to our Lord,
Thyself the blessing give.

- 4 Thou all our works in us hast wrought,
Our good is all divine;
The praise of every holy thought
And righteous word is thine.
- 5 From thee, through Jesus, we receive
The pow'r on thee to call,
In whom we are, and move, and live:—
Our God is *all in all*.

Devout and unimpeachable in the matter; and not inelegant in the poetry. Would it not secure more effectually accuracy of doctrine to read "a blessing" for "the blessing," in verse 3d, line 4th? or might the 3d verse be omitted, as the entire sentiment is repeated in verses 4th and 5th?

Hymn LXXVIII.—Miss Williams.

Habitual Devotion.

- 1 While thee I seek, protecting Pow'r,
Be my vain wishes still'd;
And may this consecrated hour
With better hopes be fill'd.
- 2 Thy love the pow'r of thought bestow'd,
To thee my thoughts would soar;
Thy mercy o'er my life has flow'd,
That mercy I adore.
- 3 In each event of life, how clear
Thy ruling hand I see!
Each blessing to my soul more dear,
Because conferr'd by thee.
- 4 In every joy that crowns my days,
In every pain I bear,
My heart shall find delight in praise,
Or seek relief in prayer.
- 5 When gladness wings my favour'd hour,
Thy love my thoughts shall fill;
Resign'd, when storms of sorrow low'r,
My soul shall meet thy will.
- 6 My lifted eye, without a tear,
The gath'ring storm shall see;
My steadfast heart shall know no fear,
That heart will rest on thee.

A beautiful hymn.

Hymn LXXIX.—Contentment.

- 1 Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sov'reign will denies,
Accepted at thy throne of grace
Let this petition rise:
- 2 Give me a calm and thankful heart,
From every murmur free;
The blessings of thy grace impart,
And make me live to thee:
- 3 Let the sweet hope that thou art mine
My life and death attend,
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey's end.

There is a want of rhyme between lines 1st and 3d in the 1st verse; to remedy which we propose, in place of lines 3d and 4th—

Accepted at thy throne, let this
My humble prayer arise.

In verse 3d, line 1st, for "Let the

sweet hope," we propose, "And let the hope"; which both improves the rhythm and excludes the word "sweet."

Hymn LXXX.—Newton.

End of the Christian Journey.

- 1 As, when the weary trav'ler gains
The height of some commanding hill,
His heart revives, if, o'er the plains,
He sees his home, though distant still:
- 2 So when the Christian pilgrim views,
By faith, his mansion in the skies,
The sight his fainting strength renews,
And wings his speed to reach the prize:
- 3 The hope of heav'n his spirit cheers,
No more he grieves for sorrows past;
Nor any future conflict fears,
So he may safe arrive at last.
- 4 Oh Lord, on thee our hopes we stay
To lead us on to thine abode;
Assur'd thy love will far o'erpay
The hardest labours of the road.

A good hymn. But the title is not quite appropriate, at least as we understand it; it intimates that the Christian is near the end of his journey; whereas the hymn, verse 1st, line 4th, represents his home as "distant still," and the 4th verse contains a similar thought—"labours of the road." Perhaps it might be changed to "Heaven seen by faith." But we see little use of titles in general.

Next are four hymns under the head of

DEATH.

Hymn LXXXI.

"Let me die the death of the righteous."

- 1 How blest the righteous when he dies!
When sinks a weary soul to rest,
How mildly beam the closing eyes,
How gently heaves th' expiring breast!
- 2 So fades a summer cloud away,
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er,
So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies a wave along the shore.
- 3 A holy quiet reigns around,
A calm which life nor death destroys;
Nothing disturbs that peace profound
Which his unfetter'd soul enjoys.
- 4 Farewell, conflicting hopes and fears,
Where lights and shades alternate dwell!
How bright th' unchanging morn appears!
Farewell, inconstant world, farewell!
- 5 Life's duty done, as sinks the clay,
Light from its load the spirit flies;
While heav'n and earth combine to say—
"How blest the righteous when he dies!"

The first two verses are very beautiful, yet, for general application, very unsound: are the righteous always favoured with the *bodily* tranquillity there described? do they never die in

grievous pains and convulsions of the flesh,—as Wickliffe did, when the papists ascribed to diabolical possession the distortions of his palsy?—or, are we to regard this *outward* quiet, when it occurs, as the chief blessing of a righteous death? Proceeding to the 3d verse, we find that the sacred stillness of such a dying chamber, the "quiet which reigns *around*," is not destroyed by either "life or death;"—by whose life or death? and are there usually no audible lamentations in such a scene? and does the "peace profound" of an "unfetter'd soul," its peace with God, depend on there being quietness about the dying bed? The two last verses are better.—This piece has probably been suggested by a dying scene such as it describes; and, as applied to any particular instance of the kind, it would be as affecting as it is beautiful. But it would not answer to give it a general application, and thus make bodily serenity a test of the death of the righteous.

Hymn LXXXII.

- 1 O where shall rest be found,
Rest for the weary soul;
'Twere vain the ocean's depths to sound,
Or pierce to either pole.
- 2 The world can never give
The bliss for which we sigh:
'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.
- 3 Beyond this vale of tears
There is a life above,
Unmeasur'd by the flight of years—
And all that life is love.
- 4 There is a death, whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath:
O what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death!
- 5 Lord God of truth and grace,
Teach us that death to shun,
Lest we be driven from thy face,
For evermore undone.

The expression "*pierce to either pole*," verse 1st, line 4th, is inelegant; we do not pierce to a spot on the surface of the globe: we propose therefore, "seek at either pole." Yet we do not like this figure, or that of "sounding the ocean's depths," as applied to obtaining "*rest*:" these allusions are indeed employed by Job (xxviii.) in reference to "*wisdom*;" but heavenly wisdom includes knowledge as well as peace; and such illustrations are highly appropriate to the former, but entirely out of place as ap-

plied to the latter. We have not been able to devise any better substitute than the following—

O where shall rest be found;
For weary mortals, rest?
Or how, with peace and quiet crown'd,
Shall life or death be blest?

"Perhaps some pen more lucky than our own" may provide a more real improvement.

Hymn LXXXIII.—Judgment.

- 1 Great God, what do I see and hear!
The end of things created!
The Judge of man I see appear,
On clouds of glory seated:
The trumpet sounds; the graves restore
The dead which they contain'd before:
Prepare, my soul, to meet him.
- 2 The dead in Christ shall first arise,
At the last trumpet's sounding,
Caught up to meet him in the skies,
With joy their Lord surrounding:
No gloomy fears their souls dismay;
His presence sheds eternal day
On those prepar'd to meet him.
- 3 But sinners, fill'd with guilty fears,
Behold his wrath prevailing;
For they shall rise, and find their tears—
And sighs are unavailing:
The day of grace is past and gone;
Trembling they stand before the throne
All unprepar'd to meet him.
- 4 Great God, what do I see and hear!
The end of things created!
The Judge of man I see appear,
On clouds of glory seated:
Beneath his cross I view the day
When heav'n and earth shall pass away,
And thus prepare to meet him.

A practical and edifying hymn. The 6th line of the 1st stanza is very inelegant: may we change the 5th and 6th lines to the following?—

The trumpet sounds, the mountains quake,
The earth is mov'd, the dead awake: &c.

There is an ungraceful change from the present tense to the future in stanza 2d, line 1st, and in stanza 3d, line 3d: as the present tense pervades the rest of the hymn, we would read the former line—

Lo! first the dead in Christ arise—

and to remedy the latter blemish, for "shall rise" we propose "arise."

Hymn LXXXIV.

- 1 And will the Judge descend?
And must the dead arise,
And not a single soul escape
His all-discerning eyes?
- 2 And from his righteous lips
Shall this dread sentence sound,
And through the num'rous guilty throng
Spread black despair around?

- 3 "Depart from me accurs'd,
"To everlasting flame,
"For rebel angels first prepar'd,
"Where never mercy came."
- 4 How will my heart endure
The terrors of that day,
When earth and heav'n before his face
Astonish'd shrink away?
- 5 But, ere the trumpet shakes
The mansions of the dead,
Hark, from the gospel's cheering sound,
What joyful tidings spread!—
- 6 Ye sinners, seek his grace,
Whose wrath ye cannot bear;
Fly to the shelter of his cross,
And find salvation there:
- 7 So shall that curse remove,
By which the Saviour bled;
And the last awful day shall pour
His blessings on your head.

A very poor composition. The course of thought is nearly parallel with that of Hymn 13th (first part) in our Prayer Book: let the two be compared together, and the inferiority of this one will be evident. We attempt no corrections.

Next follow two hymns under the title of

HEAVEN.

Hymn LXXXV.—Watts.

- 1 There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Eternal day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.
- 2 There everlasting spring abides,
And never-fading flow'rs:
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heav'nly land from ours.
- 3 Bright fields, beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dress'd in living green;
So to the Jews fair Canaan stood,
While Jordan roll'd between.
- 4 But tim'rous mortals start, and shrink
To cross the narrow sea;
And linger, shiv'ring on the brink,
And fear to launch away.
- 5 O! could we make our doubts remove,
Those gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
With faith's illumin'd eyes!
- 6 Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's streams, nor death's cold flood
Should fright us from the shore.

This hymn, though containing no error, is yet objectionable in many particulars. There are several phrases of doubtful propriety; such as "day *excludes* the night," "pleasures *banish* pain," in verse 1st; "narrow *sea*," applied to a river, in verses 2d and 4th; "shivering," and "launch away," both wanting in dignity, in verse 4th; and "make our doubts *remove*," in verse 5th:—"streams" also, in verse 6th, line 3d,

should be "stream." The description of heaven is in part in metaphors not directly applied to that region in holy writ; such as "spring," "flowers," "bright fields," and "living green," in verses 2d and 3d: and if these expressions are faulty, the word "landscape," in the last verse, becomes equally so. We think these objections enough to condemn the hymn.

Hymn LXXXVI.—Montgomery.

Rev. vii. 9, &c.

- 1 Who are these in bright array,
This innumerable throng,
Round the altar, night and day
Tuning their triumphant song?—
"Worthy is the Lamb once slain,
"Blessing, honour, glory, pow'r,
"Wisdom, riches, to obtain,
"New dominion every hour."
- 2 These through fiery trials trod,
These from great affliction came:
Now,—before the throne of God,
Seal'd with his eternal name,
Clad in raiment pure and white,
Victor palms in every hand,—
Through their great Redeemer's might,
More than conquerors they stand.
- 3 Hunger, thirst, disease unknown,
On immortal fruits they feed;
Them the Lamb amidst the throne
Shall to living fountains lead:
Joy and gladness banish sighs,
Perfect love dispels their fears,
And for ever from their eyes
God shall wipe away their tears.

A beautiful subject for a paraphrase; but the work is rather indifferently executed. In stanza 1st, line 4th, for "triumphant" we would read "triumphal:" the last line of that stanza is peculiarly bad; we would propose in place of it—

Empire in the realm of light—

and to make good the rhyme, for "power" in line 6th, read "might." The latter half of the 3d stanza has one or two harshly reading lines: also, the expression "joy and gladness banish sighs," is bad, and "love dispels their fears" is not good; for sighs cannot be "banished" from heaven, where they have never entered; and "dispels" should be *has dispelled*,—this "casting out of fear" being not a perpetual process, but done once for all: may we then read thus the four concluding lines?

There, in joy forgot their sighs,
Lost, in perfect love, their fears,
Ever, ever from their eyes
God shall wipe away their tears.

There next are three hymns classed under the title of

PRAISE.

Hymn LXXXVII.—Watts.

[Rev. v. 41—13.]

- 1 Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne;
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.
- 2 "Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry,
"To be exalted thus!"
"Worthy the Lamb," our hearts reply,
"For he was slain for us!"
- 3 Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and pow'r divine:
And blessings more than we can give
Be, Lord, for ever thine!
- 4 The whole creation join in one,
To bless the sacred name
Of Him that sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb.

A spirited paraphrase. For "joys," in verse 1st, line 4th, we would read "hearts:" and for "our hearts," in verse 2d, line 3d, we propose "let us," or "let men."

Hymn LXXXVIII.—Robinson.

- 1 Saviour, source of every blessing,
Tune my heart to grateful lays;
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for ceaseless songs of praise.
- 2 Teach me some melodious measure,
Sung by raptur'd saints above;
Fill my soul with sacred pleasure,
While I sing redeeming love.
- 3 Thou didst seek me when a stranger,
Wand'ring from the fold of God;
Thou, to save my soul from danger,
Didst redeem me with thy blood.
- 4 By thy hand restor'd, defended,
Safe through life thus far I'm come;
Safe, O Lord, when life is ended,
Bring me to my heav'nly home.

We see no poetical merit in this piece; and there are at least two objectionable passages. Verse 2d asks for "some melodious measure sung by saints above;" if by "measure" is meant the *music* of heavenly hymns, the petition is silly as used in devotion, though it may do as mere poetry; if by "measure" is meant the *words* of heavenly hymns, the petitioner must go to the book of Revelation, or to Isaiah vi. where some of the forms of heavenly devotion are revealed. Verse 3d implies that redemption by the blood of Christ "saves the redeemed soul from danger:" this is either mere verbiage, or else calvinism;—if Christ shed his blood for me, I am in no danger; he

died *not* for those in danger, of course not for those in perdition; in other words, he died for the elect only: the language of the hymn *may* thus countenance both indefectible grace, and limited redemption. Line 2d of verse 4th is peculiarly inelegant.—The metre being a difficult one, we cannot undertake the labour of correcting these many faults; nor is the piece worthy of the trouble.

Hymn LXXXIX. Songs of Praise.

- 1 *Songs of praise* the angels sang;
Heav'n with hallelujahs rang
When Jehovah's work begun,
When he spoke, and it was done.
- 2 *Songs of praise* awoke the morn
When the Prince of Peace was born;
Songs of praise arose when he
Captive led captivity.
- 3 Heav'n and earth must pass away;
Songs of praise shall crown that day:
God will make new heav'ns and earth;
Songs of praise shall hail their birth.
- 4 And shall man alone be dumb
Till that glorious kingdom come?
No; the church delights to raise
Psalms, and hymns, and *songs of praise*.
- 5 Saints below, with heart and voice,
Still in *songs of praise* rejoice;
Learning here, by faith and love,
Songs of praise to sing above.
- 6 Borne upon their latest breath,
Songs of praise shall conquer death;
Then, amidst eternal joy,
Songs of praise their pow'rs employ.

Surely there is no other merit in this piece than that of *effect*;—it is too deficient in both dignity and accuracy for public worship. As to its want of dignity, we leave it, without argument, to the taste of those who are to judge. Of its want of accuracy, we name the following particulars:—in verse 1st, line 3d, “begun” should more properly be “began:”—verse 3d finds a topic for “songs of praise” in both the “passing away” of heaven and earth, and in their being created anew; the latter event is the only proper subject of triumph, the former one will rather produce terror:—the fourth verse asks if men shall be “dumb” till the “coming” of that “glorious kingdom,” as if those who utter no praise *till* then, would then be *permitted* to join in these songs; the contingency, though stated hypothetically, is absurd:—in verse 6th, “songs of praise” are said to “conquer death;” a phrase doubly incorrect; for

songs rather celebrate a victory than gain it; and the victory over death is only anticipated at our “latest breath;” we then are conquered, and it is not until “this corruptible puts on incorruption,” that the promised victory over that foe is “brought to pass.”

We finish our present number with two pieces intended to be used after sermon; they require no particular remarks.

CONCLUDING HYMNS.

Hymn XC.

- 1 Almighty Father! bless the word,
Which, thro' thy grace, we now have heard;
O may the precious seed take root,
Spring up, and bear abundant fruit!
- 2 We praise thee for the means of grace,
Thus in thy courts to seek thy face:
Grant, Lord! that we who worship here
May all at length in heav'n appear.

Hymn XCI.

- 1 Lord! dismiss us with thy blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
Let us each, thy love possessing,
Triumph in redeeming grace:
O refresh us
Trav'ling through this wilderness!
- 2 Thanks we give, and adoration,
For the gospel's joyful sound;
May the fruits of thy salvation
In our hearts and lives abound:
May thy presence
With us evermore be found!

Our labour is nearly completed. We hope it has not been entirely in vain; yet we are far from imagining that we have committed no mistakes. Though maintaining the peremptory style of a review, it has always been a satisfactory reflection that our opinions were not to be final, but that a tribunal worthy of all reverence and confidence was to sit in judgment upon them.

STERNHOLD.

For the Christian Journal.

Miscellanea Theologica.

It is my purpose, Messrs. Editors, (if it should suit yours,) to communicate occasional papers, on sundry matters pertaining to theology, for publication in your Journal. As an introduction, I would ask permission at present to give my reasons for the choice of the title which is prefixed to this article, and will be so (with your leave) to its successors. The combination of terms so heterogeneous as the two which form

my title, may appear to many grave reasoners paradoxical. Be it so. It does not follow that it is blameable. Reason and authority will prove the contrary.—In the first place, a paradoxical title is eligible on account of its tendency to attract attention. Thus it introduces its adjunct to the notice of readers who might otherwise have passed it over in contemptuous neglect. Paradoxology is also well calculated to give a favourable idea of the abilities of the author. Who knows not the paradoxicalness of the gigantic Warburton and his intrepid follower, the orthodox Horsley? And shall not little wits be allowed to take the same road to literary fame that these their *magni Apollines* have so successfully trodden? Many a ponderous tome has been brought to notice, and introduced to everlasting fame, by a bold and successful paradox. Might not then a petty essayist endeavour to secure success to his puny efforts, by holding forth this mistletoe of literary druidism, and thus throwing a magic spell over the attention of his readers? But such is not my aim. It is in the soberness of truth that I prefix this title to my lucubrations; and if ever adjuncts were appropriate, these are so. For what is theology but a vast miscellany? or what department of miscellaneous learning can you produce which appertains not to theology? The arts and sciences, the handicrafts—history, philosophy, physics, and philology,—all, all are parts of this master science, this sum of human knowledge. Is not a knowledge of the works of God necessary to a knowledge of his perfections—to an acquaintance with his attributes and actions? And what are the subjects of all the branches of human knowledge, if not the works of God? The arts and sciences, the handmaids of philosophy and physic, open to us the book of nature, and lead us from nature up to nature's God. History and philosophy acquaint us with the noblest of his works, ourselves. All are united in that noble structure, natural theology. Go to the works of Bentley, Kidder, Harris, Whiston, Clarke, Woodward, Derham, Paley, and a long list of similar worthies, for ample proof of these assertions.—That more

splendid system of theology contained in the revealed will of God is equally extensive in its claims. Its subsidies are drawn from every branch of knowledge. Its study is truly miscellaneous. Witness the Herculean labours of theologians of the last and present centuries in illustrating, explaining, confirming, and defining the sacred text. What treasures of ancient and modern learning, what vast stores of knowledge of every species have been bestowed upon these objects, and yet the subject is unexhausted! Travellers, and students whose utmost extent of peregrination has been from library to library; men of letters, and men of business; historians and poets; philosophers and philologists, have all contributed their mite, and yet the treasury is not full. Judge now if theology be not miscellaneous. Nor, were my title less appropriate, would it be without example. When the learned Wotton has entitled "Discourses on Jewish Traditions" "miscellaneous," who will presume to censure the application of the term to the whole science of which his subject forms so small a branch? Again, let the matter and style of my lucubrations be as *miscellaneous* as they may, are they not more entitled to the epithet "theological," than the works of that arch-blasphemer Thomas Paine?

I hope I have sufficiently vindicated my title from any imputations that may appear to attach thereto. So much attention would not have been bestowed upon it, were I not conscious of the importance of first impressions. Hoping that my endeavours may be acceptable, and that future performances will compensate for present deficiencies, I remain

Your obedient servant,
P. D. G.

For the Christian Journal.

Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New-York Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Society, made at their Meeting on the Evening of Wednesday before Easter, March 30, 1825.

THE Board of Managers of the Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Society, in this their Eighth Annual Report, beg leave to offer, as the best

evidence of the state of the schools belonging to the association, a few extracts from the reports of their respective superintendents.

ZION CHURCH SCHOOL.

Male Department.

There are now enrolled on our register 176 boys. Number of those attending regularly about 110, of whom 21 read in the Bible, and 40 read correctly in the Testament. In attention to their studies, and in their moral deportment, there has been much improvement. There are eleven apprentice boys who attend our school, and who have no other means of gaining instruction; four of them, who, when they entered, were unacquainted with the alphabet, now read in the Bible. In the exercise of the memory much pains have been taken, and the results have been very encouraging. The evidence which we are enabled to give of the improvement of the scholars committed to our charge, and the large increase of the school since our last report, are circumstances of high gratification, and we would return our most grateful thanks to the teachers of our school, who, with a self-denial truly praiseworthy, have attended to their duties, and have laboured to do good; to the patrons of it, who, by their influence and example, by their visits and donations for its use, have strengthened our hands; and to God, whose loving-kindness and tender mercy have sustained and encouraged us in all the circumstances under which we have been placed; and to him, if any good has been done through our instrumentality, we would ascribe all the glory.

There is a library of 370 volumes attached to this school.

Female Department.

From the commencement of Zion Church Female Sunday School to June, 1824, there have been admitted 851 children; and from the latter period to March 27th last, we have received 275 scholars. The whole number of names on our register at present is 400, of whom the average number of attendants is 200. There are 12 classes, 9 having assistant teachers. In visiting a little girl, her mother expressed a desire to read: we encouraged the idea, admitted her into the school, and have the happiness to see her reading that book which will point out to her the way to happiness. There are several of our little girls who have made so much improvement in their behaviour that we think it worthy of notice: during the last month, many little girls have repeated the catechism throughout, and have committed large portions of the Scriptures to memory.

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL SCHOOL:

Male Department.

The school has been completely reorganized, the scholars examined, and the school divided into classes and divisions. This plan being derived from the Board of Directors, a commit-

tee of 5 was appointed from that body to visit the whole school, which continues to be done weekly. There are on the register 220 names, viz. 160 white and 60 coloured; the average number attending 70, and the highest number present at one time 125. We can safely say, that with the exception of the decrease in the number of attendants, the school was never, in its internal state, in a more flourishing way; and we are assured that a larger proportion on the register attends than formerly; so that, although we have lost in number, we have in effect increased the ratio of good, from the fact, that the number of attendants is by no means so fluctuating. The most prominent causes of the declension in the number of our scholars are, the Charity School, which must of necessity affect us from its contiguity to our school, and the number of churches lately built in our neighbourhood.

Our library, under proper restrictions, appears to be one means of exciting to emulation, obedience, and orderly deportment; and we have a pleasure in stating that the behaviour of the scholars generally has very much improved since our last report.

Female Department.

The eighth anniversary affords us another opportunity of communicating to the friends of this institution the permanent improvement of those who assemble at St. John's Chapel to receive religious instruction.

Our remarks will extend only to a few particulars. It is with pleasure we add, that many instances of individual improvement might be mentioned, some of which appear to be stamped with the mark of divine instruction. We will notice a little girl of 5 years of age, from whose infant lips we hear repeated the devotions of our Church, the precepts of the gospel, catechisms, psalms, and hymns.

Several of our scholars have been promoted to the office of assistant teachers. The adoption of this measure not only excites a spirit of emulation, but increases their usefulness.

It is worthy of remark, that among our coloured women is one who is more than 70 years old. When she entered the school, she could not spell nor pronounce a word; and cannot even now read without spelling; but, by her unremitting attention, has learned to repeat the Church service, besides hymns and psalms.

The conduct and improvement of the scholars generally, are such as to merit the approbation of their respective teachers.

As the spring opens our school increases. It has been reorganized, and the pupils in each class equalized: they are rewarded by a ticket for punctual attendance, correct recitations, and good behaviour.

Number 120 whites, 164 coloured—Total 284.

GRACE CHURCH SCHOOL.

Male Department.

The number of children who attend the Sunday School is 74. Their improvement is evident; their appearance neat, and deportment amiable; and we flatter ourselves that our exertions in countenancing and encour-

raging this humble part of our community, are and will continue to be attended with much benefit to the public.

Female Department.

This school at present consists of 162 scholars. They are divided into 9 classes, under the care of 6 teachers and a superintendent. Some of them are regular in their attendance, but most of them are very irregular. The average number of attendants is 70: 50 have been added during the last year: 20 from various causes have left; some have removed from the city, others have removed and joined other schools, and some have been withdrawn by their parents, who require their services at home.

CHRIST CHURCH SCHOOL.

Male Department.

The state of this school, since last report, has not undergone much alteration. The number of scholars on the register is 95, of which 26 are coloured. The average number of those attending at one time is 40. With but very few exceptions, the conduct of the children is such as affords encouragement to the conductors of the school. The library has been found to be a very efficient means of securing good behaviour both in school and church. Several of the students of the General Theological Seminary having engaged with us, the number of teachers is such as to afford ground for hope that our school will be instrumental in instructing more at a time than heretofore. Measures have been taken, which, it is hoped, will produce this result. There are now 8 teachers, 2 visitors, a secretary, and superintendent, engaged in the school.

Female Department.

In presenting the third report of the state of Christ Church Sunday School, I regret it is not in my power to notice as large an average of attendants as that of the last year. The school has been decreasing for some time past, the cause of which I attribute in a great measure to a want of visitors. The families of several of the teachers have been visited with sickness, and death; consequently those ladies have not been regular in their attendance: this has caused the children to be more careless.

There are on the register 70 scholars, of whom the average number that attends does not exceed 25. The school is under the direction of one superintendent and 5 teachers. The children, though few in number, are decent, and their behaviour in school, and during divine worship, very pleasing: most of them use their Prayer Books, and response audibly. There have been presented as rewards the past year, Prayer Books, Testaments, and several smaller books.

ST. PAUL'S CHAPEL SCHOOL.

Male Department.

The number of scholars now on the register of the male department of St. Paul's Chapel School is 62, of whom 30 have been admitted since the last anniversary. The average number that have attended regularly is 32. They

are divided into 7 classes, the teachers of which are regular and assiduous in their attendance. There has been but one scholar expelled for misconduct. Many pleasing instances might be mentioned, wherein the scholars have made great progress in learning. One boy, who, when first admitted in the school, did not know his letters, has, since the last report, been elected a teacher.

It is trusted that, with the exertions used by the teachers, and the cordial co-operation of the Board of Directors, so interesting a charity may still be extended in usefulness.

Female Department.

Since the last anniversary, 64 new scholars have been added to the school; 54 white and 10 coloured females. The greatest number of scholars for the past year, at any one time, was during the months of November and December: the average number of scholars for each Sunday in the month throughout the year, has been 49.

The whole number of teachers for the last year has been 9.

The white school is divided into 7 classes, each teacher having 12 scholars under his charge.

On examination of the reports of the teachers, nothing very material has occurred during the past year.

The children generally improve, and behave well, both during school and divine service.

Five little girls have been rewarded with Bibles, and many have received Tracts, for their diligence and good behaviour. The 5 who received Bibles (the eldest not 13,) have, since the 23d January, committed to memory, every Sunday, the texts for the day, in addition to their other lessons; the number of texts amounting to 141; not only learning the words, but the chapter and verse.

An extract from one or two reports will give a general idea of the whole. One teacher remarks, that her scholars generally evince a desire to improve; but owing to sickness and the want of clothes, their attendance through the winter has been irregular. This want is still felt, though not to the extent that it was at the commencement of the school.—Another reports, that a child in her class, aged 4 years, can spell and read very well.—In the coloured school the report states, that a child, aged 5 years, entered the second Sunday in January, who did not know the letters of the alphabet, now begins to spell.

We feel very grateful to the directors belonging to this school, for looking up our absentees.

ST. MARK'S CHURCH SCHOOL.

Male Department.

The school is about the same in number as at the last report; consisting of about 55 scholars, of whom from 25 to 30 are regular attendants. They are divided into 6 classes, and are taught by the superintendent and 2 teachers. Their improvement is full as great as can be expected, many of them attending no other place of instruction.

Since April 7, 1822, the present superintendent has received into the school 116 boys, some of whom have not attended more than two or three times, and others have left, for causes unknown to him.

Female Department.

Since the last report from this school, 30 names have been added to its register; many also have been erased, owing to change of residence, and other causes and circumstances beyond the reach of our control: so that the accession to our little flock is but small, numbering only 65; of whom between 35 and 45 have regularly attended, except during the month of February, in which it may be remembered there was much stormy weather, and the roads were frequently impassable.

Though the improvement of the children generally, has not been commensurate to our high expectations, our "hearts' desire and prayer;" yet the rapid progress of some in that knowledge which can alone "make them wise unto salvation," affords an abundant cause of thankfulness, and also an encouraging assurance of a divine blessing having rested upon our labours; as well as presents a powerful incentive to a persevering and patient continuance in this our "high calling," in the humble hope of being made instrumental in advancing our Redeemer's kingdom.

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH SCHOOL.*Female Department.*

Since writing the last annual report, a new register has been made out, from which it appears there are 112 scholars, 10 of whom are coloured.

Great improvement is evident in most of the scholars who have been *regular* in their attendance, particularly those who have been in the school since its first commencement. Some of them who could scarcely spell in two syllables, are now our best scholars, and learn with great facility their chapter in the New Testament, a hymn or two, besides revising their catechism. There are two in particular whose industry is worthy of notice. Their lessons for the morning are from 10 to 15 chapters in the Bible, besides catechism, and a hymn or poem, and they have seldom been known to say an imperfect lesson.

There are eight teachers attached to the school, which is at present under the care of one superintendent, who has to regret the resignation of her assistant, from whose zeal and intelligence she has ever derived the greatest satisfaction.

The number of scholars who regularly attend is from 40 to 60. Many absentees have returned within the last week or two; some having been absent from sickness, and others for want of shoes; several new scholars have likewise been admitted. The coloured class is at present smaller than it has been at any other period, owing to many of the girls (who are at service) having left the village. Those however who remain, are making very respectable improvement.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH SCHOOL.

It is with peculiar delight we are enabled to state, that during the past year the school has continued to prosper, and is at present in a flourishing condition. The whole number on the register is about 45. The average number

of regular attendants is 30; of this number two only have discontinued since our last report, one of whom is now about to be rewarded with the charge of one of the smaller classes. At each stated examination, a very considerable degree of proficiency is manifested both in moral and religious instruction. The laudable disposition manifested on the part of the instructors to continue their work of love, is particularly deserving of notice, and claims our highest commendation. They have long been impressed with the importance of a Sunday School establishment to ameliorate the condition of the younger part of the community, and in the prosecution of their labour ever pray the blessing of heaven will crown their efforts with success.

Branch at Fort-Washington.

During the past summer the school was in a flourishing condition, and continued so until late in the winter; when, owing to the bad state of the roads, we were deprived of regular divine worship; and many of the children too, for the want of sufficient clothing, were prevented from regularly attending. These causes contributed to decrease the number of regular attendants during the winter season. But since the opening of the spring, our school has again resumed its former appearance. Total number on the register is 40. The average number of regular attendants is 25. It would be injustice were I not to mention the zeal and perseverance manifested by the female instructors to whose charge the school is altogether committed.

TRINITY CHURCH SCHOOL.*Female Department.*

The superintendent reports the state of the school during the few months she has been gratified in taking an interest in it. The school is not as numerous as it would naturally be expected, being connected with the oldest church. It may be accounted for, however, by a reference to the great advantages arising from the daily school attached to Grace Church, which draws nearly all the poor children in its vicinity. There are now 39 scholars who actually attend, of whom 11 are coloured; 3 of whom evince every mark of desire to be enabled to read those precious promises which the gospel contains. Many read well, and commit to memory the catechism and portions of Scripture.

There are one superintendent and 5 teachers.

**ST. ANN'S CHURCH SCHOOL,
BROOKLYN.***Female Department.*

The Female Sunday School of St. Ann's Church, Brooklyn, consists of one superintendent, five teachers, and about 30 scholars on the books, of whom more than 20 are regular attendants. The school, though not large, is ably and faithfully conducted.

It will be seen from the reports here submitted, that the whole number of schools is 17, and of scholars 1998: of whom there are belonging to

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-----|
| Zion church, | { male 176 } female 400 } | 576 |
| St. John's chapel, | { male 220 } female 284 } | 504 |
| Grace church, | { male 74 } female 162 } | 236 |
| Christ church, | { male 95 } female 70 } | 165 |
| St. Paul's chapel, | { male 62 } female 69 } | 131 |
| St. Mark's church, | { male 55 } female 65 } | 120 |
| St. Luke's church, | female | 112 |
| St. Mary's church, | 45 } | 85 |
| Do. Branch School, | 40 } | |
| Trinity church, | female | 39 |
| St. Ann's church, | { female | 30 |
| Brooklyn, | } | |

The Board of Managers cannot allow the present opportunity to pass, without declaring their increased conviction of the importance of that institution which the Church has committed to their charge. Were the object of our association to impart to the ignorant the benefits of learning *merely human*, however commendable the undertaking might seem in a moral and civil point of view, the propriety of such an appropriation of the Lord's Day might well be questioned. But in the instrumentality and general necessity of literary instruction to the knowledge of God's word: in the attendance of the young and ignorant upon the ministrations of the sanctuary: in the exercises of reading and committing to memory the holy Scriptures, the Catechism, and other pious writings: in the attachment which, from habit, is formed to God's house and day; and in the pious exhortations and counsels of the superintendents and teachers; the board discover, not only the *warranty*, but the *duty* of the undertaking; and have the fullest persuasion, that while they confer an invaluable benefit upon society, in laying the wholesome restraints of religion upon "the unruly wills and affections of sinful men," they at the same time do "*God service*," in bringing "up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," those "little ones," not one of whom he willeth to perish. In these general considerations, the Board recognize for themselves, the

obligation of providing for the children of the poor the benefit of Sunday school instruction; and they deem them of that character, that none who regard the temporal and eternal welfare of their fellow-creatures, can contemplate them with indifference. They would, however, advert to another motive to diligence in this labour of love, which they think presses with peculiar force at the present time, upon every friend to religion, and upon the members of our own Church in particular.

Before the institution of Sunday Schools among us, it is well known that there existed, and do still exist in this city, Charity Schools, connected with the different denominations of Christians, in which religious instruction is blended with such as is purely secular. The funds for the maintenance of these schools are drawn principally from the congregations to which the schools respectively belong, but are aided and increased by an allowance from the Common School Fund of the State, varying in amount according to the number of scholars. An attempt has recently been made to deprive those schools of this portion of their support, upon the pretence that such an application of the Common School Fund is to promote sectarian views and feelings; and to confine its benefits in this city to the Free Schools, where nothing that savours of the peculiarities of sect will be tolerated. It requires no very large share of discernment to perceive, that the natural operation of the principle here avowed, is subversive of revealed religion itself. Because religious instruction, if given at all, must be given according to a system; and that system, if it reject all that is peculiar to the various denominations of Christians, can be little, if at all, better than a modification of Deism. For example—The doctrines of the Trinity, and of the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ, must be rejected, because, in reference to the followers of Socinus, they are sectarian peculiarities—The doctrine, that from the beginning of Christianity there has been an order of men set apart to discharge the duties of the

ministerial office, must be rejected, because, by the people styled Quakers, such doctrine is denied—The sacraments, which the divine Head of the Church instituted, and commanded to be observed until his coming again, cannot be recognized, because the same body of Christians do not receive them—One of the great sanctions of religion, that which denounces “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil,” must be dispensed with, because the advocates of universal salvation deem it unscriptural—In short, the very essence of Christianity must be extracted, if nothing of sectarian peculiarity is to be taught. Children, whose religious instruction is of this description, will therefore either remain ignorant of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, or they will learn to regard them as “the traditions of men;” and the inevitable consequence will be, a feeling of indifference towards all that is distinctive in the Christian system.

Without calling in question the purity of the motives which have influenced the advocates of this plan, it becomes the duty of every friend to pure and undefiled Christianity, to exert himself to counteract its baneful operation; for whether the attempt now making succeed or not, we should regard it as an indication of the increasing prevalence of that spirit of liberality (or rather indifference) on the subject of religion, which is so characteristic of the present age.—Among the most effectual means which the providence of God places within our reach to prevent the injurious consequences of this spurious liberality, are Sunday Schools. Here superficial and erroneous views taken of Christian truth and morals, may be displaced by that “form of sound words” once delivered to the saints, and the youthful learner impressed with the necessity of continuing in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship—Here he may be taught to know “God the Father, who created him and all the world; God the Son, who redeemed him and all mankind; and God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth him and all the people of God”—

Here he may be taught the necessity of admission into covenant with God by the rite of baptism; of the renovation of the heart and affections; and of participation in all the ordinances of the Gospel, in order to the obtaining of that grace, without which “nothing is strong, nothing is holy.” We would therefore recommend Sunday Schools to the notice, the patronage, and the exertions of all who wish well to our common Christianity, and especially of all who love that Church which the divine Saviour purchased with his blood, as a powerful means of checking the growth, not only of sceptical and infidel principles, but of those *falsely styled liberal*, which in our conscience we believe are nearly allied to them. And we would impress it upon the minds of those actively engaged in the duties of such institutions, that the object of them is *not* human learning, except so far as it is instrumental to that which is of a higher character; that sound Christian principle is the best security for good morals; and that they are furthering the best interests of civil society, when preparing their young charge for the society “of just men made perfect.”

Since the last anniversary a Standing Committee of twelve has been appointed, to whom the general superintendence of all the schools has been assigned, and whose duty it is to visit them as frequently as may be, and render a detailed report of their proceedings to the Board. The superintendents and teachers of the several schools have also organized themselves into a Society, for the purpose of “recommending and carrying into effect such measures as may appear most conducive to their welfare. From both these measures the Board confidently anticipate results greatly beneficial to the interesting charity which it is their duty and their privilege to promote.—They have again the pleasure of acknowledging their obligations to the Auxiliary Bible and Common Prayer Book and Protestant Episcopal Tract Societies; from the former of which they have received 48 Bibles and 217 Prayer Books, and from the latter 784 religious Tracts.

The Board would do violence to their feelings, did they omit to say how large a debt of gratitude is due to those who, at the sacrifice of personal ease and convenience, are employed in giving a religious education to the sons and daughters of poverty. The office which they have voluntarily assumed, is one too of very considerable labour, and (unless sweetened by the consciousness of discharging a duty highly acceptable to him whose servants we are) exceedingly irksome. Is it, then, too much to ask from their brethren in the Church to encourage them in their arduous duties, by forming themselves into committees for the purpose of visiting the schools, of procuring scholars, and of ascertaining the causes of absence? Is it too much to ask from them the small amount of funds necessary to the existence and efficiency of our schools? We hope not; and were it not for past experience, we should say, we are persuaded not. In one thing, however, we will be bold, because we feel that we have a claim which no Christian heart will gainsay—we ask an interest in your prayers.

Signed by order of the Board,
BENJAMIN T. ONDERDONK,
Chairman.

Attest,
Thomas N. Stanford, Sec'y.
Wednesday before Easter,
March 30, 1825.

Interesting Correspondence.

WE have been favoured with a copy of the letter from the clerical members of the convention of this diocese of 1824, to Bishop Hobart, referred to at page 105 of our last number; also with the bishop's reply to the same, addressed to the Rev. Dr. Harris, president of the convention; and have great pleasure in presenting these interesting documents to our readers.—*Ed.C.J.*

*To the Right Rev. JOHN HENRY HOBART,
D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New-York.*

Oct. 20th, 1824.

RIGHT REV. FATHER IN GOD,

WE, the undersigned, Clergymen of your diocese, assembled in this city in our annual convention, disappointed in the hope

we had formed of meeting you, beg leave to unite in addressing to you a letter. We have the fullest confidence also, that the unfeigned respect and affection by which we are actuated, are shared by our absent brethren, and would undoubtedly lead them, were they here, to unite with us.

We all feel sensible, that for the degree of prosperity with which our diocese has been blessed, wherein we greatly rejoice, we are, under Providence, peculiarly indebted to your faithful superintendence, and your unwearied and disinterested labours. Therefore, to all the strong motives of personal respect and affection, and to those which are dictated by the essential services you have rendered to the general interests of religion and the Church, are added others, arising out of our solicitude for those interests in this particular portion of Christ's household, for the continuance of our fervent prayers for God's protecting providence over you, for the restoration of your health, and for your safe and happy return to your diocese, your family, and your friends.

Through the promised blessing of the great Head of the Church, we humbly trust the work of the Lord has continued to prosper in our portion of his vineyard during the past year. Several new parishes have been formed, and the old ones have continued to experience a blessing on the word and ordinances of the Gospel. Several of your candidates and deacons have been ordained, agreeably to an arrangement made by you before your departure, by the bishop of New-Jersey: and we would take this opportunity of expressing to you, the sense of obligation which we feel towards that excellent prelate, for the readiness and cheerfulness with which those services have been rendered, and for the kindness and hospitality with which the candidates, and those of us who have accompanied them, have been received, when those ordinations have been held at his place of residence. We are indebted for a similar favour, in the only instance requiring his agency, to the bishop of Connecticut.

We sincerely regret that to these circumstances indicative of our prosperity, we must add the loss, by death, of two of our number within the past year. One of these was the Rev. Caleb Hopkins, formerly an aged presbyter of the diocese of Pennsylvania, who removed into this diocese shortly before your departure, and died about two months since, having passed the interim in the performance of his duties, as the pastor of the two small congregations at Angelica and Bath. But the most afflicting bereavement we have sustained, is that occasioned by the recent death of our young brother, and very promising fellow-labourer, the Rev. James L. Yvonnnet, not two months after his ordination

as deacon. Your intimate acquaintance with the character and qualifications of this excellent young man, will, we are confident, unite your grief with that of your clergy for the trying dispensation which has so soon deprived us of him, and so soon removed him from that Church, of which we had hoped to see him one of the brightest ornaments, and one of the most faithful and useful ministers. But, trying as the dispensation is, our firm hope and trust are still placed on the sure mercies and covenant-promises of our divine Lord and Master. The Church is in his hands, and though, for her own good, he may see fit to visit her with affliction, he will keep and perform his word, to grant a blessing on the faithful efforts which, by his grace, are made to advance her prosperity and welfare.

To those efforts we beg leave, Right Rev. Sir, with humble dependence on God as our helper, to assure you we will continue to devote ourselves: and preserving an affectionate regard for you, as our ecclesiastical head and spiritual father, and with fervent prayers that your return may be hastened, we look with joyful anticipation to that event, that we may again be blessed with your counsels, edified by your example, and encouraged by your successful labours, to go on in the great work to which we have been set apart.

Begging to be remembered in your prayers, and to be favoured with your blessing, we remain,

Right Rev. Father,
With the truest respect
and affection,
Your Sons in the Gospel.

[Signed by more than 50 clergymen attending the convention.]

Rome, January 15, 1825.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I cannot express the emotions excited by the Address of the Clergy of the diocese of New-York who attended the annual convention, which I have received at this place. Assure them, my dear Sir, that I most deeply feel that the confidence and affection which they extend to me, lay me under a debt of gratitude which I shall never be able to discharge. With God's grace, I will do all that I can to show them how grateful I am for their confidence, and how much I value their affection. A clergy, and let me also say, a laity, so kind and so indulgent to their bishop, deserve a much better one than I have been, or can be, to them. To the united, faithful, and zealous labours of this clergy, aided uniformly by the cordial co-operation of the laity, must be attributed, very principally, the prosperity of the diocese.

I shall return, through God's good providence, to my country, with an increased

sense of the value of its civil and religious institutions, and especially of the excellence of those apostolical and primitive principles which distinguish the Church, of which it has pleased God to make us ministers.

I beg you to convey to the clergy the assurances of my deep and unfeigned affection. And that the blessing of Almighty God may rest on them, and on you, my venerable friend and brother, is the constant prayer of

Your and their
Faithful and affectionate,
J. H. HOBART.

The Rev. Dr. Harris.

For the Christian Journal.

Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 17, 23, 26, 27, 31.

Cry, said the voice, thro' all the land,
Let all the people understand.

The Lord alone is he
Who called the earth from empty space,
And fix'd the water's resting place,—

To light—said—"Let it be."
He bids thee cry, All flesh is grass,
Its beauty like the tender flower
Whose transient odours quickly pass,
Fading within a fleeting hour.

But God remains,
His word sustains
Each weary, troubled mind.
He knows their grief,
And sends relief,
Which all who seek may find.

Lift to the heavens thy wond'ring eye,
Observe those orbs whose light supply
The absence of the sun;
That God who form'd them, and sustains,
Their nature knows, and various names,
And how they circling run.
He views the prince, and scorns the pride
That spurns beneath its feet
The slave, who soon will, side by side,
In death his tyrant meet.

Nations and all
This world can call
Or sweet, or good, or great,
Must fade and flee,
For vanity
Is stamp'd on all by fate.

Th' Almighty God, Creator great,
Vouchsafes to view our low estate,—
Hears each repentant sigh.
He who immensity can fill,
Nor heaven contain, he deigneth still
To hear the sinner's cry.
Like one small drop in ocean wide
Our world 'midst worlds appears;
Yet God the ravens' wants supplied—
Their cries for food he hears.
Could he then cease
To bless with peace
An humble, praying soul?
He waiteth still
Their hopes to fill,
And all their cares console.
On eagles' wings they soar on high,
And look to joys beyond the sky.

M. A. W.

Obituary Notice.

Died, at his residence in Fairfield, on Sunday, the 27th Feb. the Rev. PHILLO SHELTON, aged 70. A numerous acquaintance justly lament his departure. It is seldom that any community is called upon to mourn the loss of a more truly pious and good man. The history of such a person is diversified by few incidents calculated to interest the general reader. He who ministers in holy things is not called forth by a bustling world to mingle in its contests, and contend for its honours. It is in the stillness of peaceful retirement, amidst the poor and afflicted, and in the solemn assemblies of the church, that his life it principally spent. The incidents which mark the course of such a life are of necessity, few that can excite attention, except in the minute observer of the progress of that religion, which, like the still small voice, finds its way *silently* to the hearts of men. Still, however, the practically religious and amiable character of this good man, ought not to pass unnoticed, nor be forgotten. But while we revere his memory, and lament his loss, we do not intend to become his panegyrists, nor contend that he was free from the infirmities inseparable from human nature. No man ever yet lived to the age of seventy, and committed no fault; but few have committed less errors, or preserved a *conscience more void of offence towards God and towards men*, than has the Rev. Mr. Shelton.

He was born at Huntington, May 5th, 1754. From his youth he was deeply impressed with the importance of embracing the Christian religion. Viewing this life as the commencement of man's existence, and the only time allotted to him in which he may prepare for enjoying an eternity of happiness, the proper improvement of the present time, to the future welfare of the soul, became to him a subject of the deepest interest. Under these impressions he embraced Christianity in early life, and came to the holy communion as an instituted means of grace. Finding by sweet experience, that the path of virtue and religion was the path of peace, he became anxious that others should participate with him in the cheering prospect of a glorious immortality. This excited his desire to become a dispenser of those doctrines and sacraments which were the source of his own consolations and hope. After having finished the requisite studies he entered Yale College in 1771, preparative to receiving holy orders, and becoming a minister of the Gospel of peace. During his residence at college he sustained a fair character and respectable standing, and graduated in 1775. As the arduous struggle between the then colonies and Great-Britain prevented him from receiving ordination, he became a lay reader

in the parishes of Stratfield, now Bridgeport, Fairfield, and Weston. In 1785, upon the return of Bishop Seabury from Europe, clothed with Episcopal authority, he entered the ministry, and was the first person episcopally ordained in the United States. The vestries of the above named parishes unanimously elected him their pastor. This appointment he accepted, and notwithstanding repeated invitations to other parishes much more eligible, and in a pecuniary point of view far more promising, he chose to remain with his beloved people; and although with a small salary, he persevered in the faithful discharge of his duty, gratified by daily observing that his labours were not in vain in the Lord.

In his family he was the kind and affectionate husband—the tender and exemplary parent. Among his people, he imitated the example of his divine Master, comforting the afflicted, relieving the distressed, instructing the ignorant, and doing good to all. In his preaching he was plain and unostentatious. As he felt the importance of the momentous truths which he delivered, he was solicitous that it should be felt by his audience, and deeply impressed upon the minds of those intrusted to his spiritual guidance. By the daily practice of the virtues which he inculcated, he set an example worthy the imitation of his flock, and furnished an irresistible argument, that he was deeply interested in their eternal welfare. By pursuing this course of conduct for many years, the aged esteemed him their most sincere friend, while the young viewed him with filial respect and love. Thus cemented in mutual affection did this worthy pastor and his people pass more than thirty years. But the parish of Fairfield having received considerable accessions, and that of Bridgeport having greatly increased in numbers, he was compelled, although reluctantly, to discontinue his services in Weston, to enable him to supply the spiritual wants of the rapidly increasing parish of Bridgeport. This parish at the commencement of Mr. Shelton's ministry, was small, but continued gradually to increase for several years. But as the borough of Bridgeport increased in population, and with it that part of the congregation, the location of the old church was found to be quite inconvenient, and it was deemed expedient to erect a new one in the more dense part of the population. In this work, which commenced in 1801, their pious pastor assisted the people not only by his counsel, but also by liberal contributions. After the removal of the church, large accessions were made to the number of his hearers, *those assembled to join with him in the worship of the Supreme Being*. For more than twenty years after the erection of the new church he had the satisfaction

of seeing his labours blessed by the great Head of the Church, and being beloved by his children in the Gospel. Indeed, few clergymen have enjoyed the happiness of being more universally esteemed by their acquaintance, or more generally beloved by their people. From the commencement of his ministry to his death, but one circumstance transpired which caused disagreeable sensations between him and either of his parishes. Notwithstanding he resigned the pastoral charge of the congregation in Weston ten years since, they still retain the tenderest regard for his memory, and delight to recount the virtues of his life. And, until a short time previous to his death, the same sentiment of esteem pervaded the breasts of the church at Bridgeport. But from some circumstance unknown to the writer, he resigned the rectorship of that parish on last Easter; he has since confined his services to the parish of Fairfield. Still, however, many of the aged, and those who have been reared under his spiritual guidance, revere his memory, and mourn his loss.

The high estimation in which he was held by his people in Fairfield, is truly exhibited in the following excellent and pious letter from their committee to the afflicted widow.

To Mrs. Shelton—Madam,

We are appointed a committee, and directed to wait upon and tender you the sincere condolence of ourselves, and the rest of the members of the Episcopal Society in Fairfield, for the great and grievous loss which you have sustained in the bereavement, by death, of our worthy, respected, and beloved pastor, the Rev. Mr. Shelton, your late consort, and our best friend—our sincere and humble prayers are offered to Almighty God, that his death may be sanctified to you and your family, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour; and we humbly pray that he will have you in his holy keeping, and that you may bear the loss with Christian fortitude, trusting in the widow's and the orphan's God for support and comfort. The loss to you, to us, and to those we represent, we feel to be great, and sincerely lament—but we submit to the will of the Almighty, for he gave and he taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.

As the Rev. Mr. Shelton has been our pastor and spiritual teacher for more than forty years, and has built us up and kept us together as a Christian church, we, for ourselves, and by the special direction of the rest of the members of the society, request that you will permit us to show our gratitude and respect to him, by burying his remains under the church in Fairfield, and by erecting a proper monument, commemorative of his worth and merits, and of our love and affection for him. In com-

pliance, you will confer a great and lasting favour on your sincere friends and humble servants,

WALTER SHERWOOD,
HULL SHERWOOD,

Committee from the Wardens, Vestry, and Members of the Episcopal Society, Fairfield.

Although the excellencies of this good man are a theme upon which I might long dwell with delight, my limits will permit me to go no further. Having fought the good fight, and kept the faith, there is a crown of glory laid up for him, which God, the righteous Judge, will give him at the last day.

Died, in this city, on Monday, April 25, in the 67th year of his age, Gen. MATTHEW CLARKSON. In the death of this truly excellent man, our country has lost one of its most upright and useful citizens, and one of the most distinguished of the few remaining heroes of her revolution; society has lost one of its greatest blessings; the Christian religion one of its brightest ornaments; and the Church one of its most pious and exemplary members.

Rarely, if ever, lived the man whose religion more uniformly and thoroughly entered into the composition of his character, and governed his life. And it was emphatically in his character and life that the light of his religion shone before men. Never, it is believed, was the power of godliness more thoroughly experienced, and never was it accompanied with less parade and ostentation. His religion had its foundation laid deep and strong in a thorough reception of the distinctive principles of the gospel; and its genuine character was manifested by a *life of piety*. On the services of the sanctuary he was an uniform attendant, not only on the Lord's day, but also on holy days and prayer days. On the banquet of that most heavenly food, which consists of the hallowed symbols of the Saviour's body and blood, he delighted to feed. Nor only in the great congregation, but also in retirement, was he constant and faithful in the exercises of piety and devotion. The religion thus manifested and cultivated was a thoroughly practical principle. The love of God above all things, whence it proceeded, was connected with the love of his neighbour as himself, or, as it has been said of him, even *more than himself*. He was one of the kindest, most benevolent, and most disinterested of men; always ready and willing to contribute all he could, by pecuniary aid and personal services, to the benefit of his fellow-men. His extensive liberality, and the active part which, for many years, he took in our most prominent benevolent institutions, have erected, in the affections of his fellow citizens, a lasting monument to his memory.

There was one sphere in which, in an especial manner, he moved as a being of almost a superior order; where his ardent piety, his wonted cheerfulness, his kindness, affection, and fidelity, diffused happiness all around him. But here language can never do him justice: that can be done only in those feelings which are exclusively sacred to the circle of kindred and of chosen friends. There only can be felt the loss which has been there sustained. But the loss is theirs only whom he has left behind. *His is infinite gain*—all that gain which is comprised in the consoling assurance, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD.

Died, of consumption, on the 15th of March, 1825, on St. Helena Island, South-Carolina, WILLIAM PARKER COFFIN, late a student in the General Theological Seminary, and a candidate for holy orders in the diocese of South-Carolina.

Had it pleased God to have spared the life of this amiable young man, he would have been an ornament to the profession he had chosen, and have adorned the Church of the Redeemer, both by his life and doctrine; his talents eminently qualifying him for the one, and his piety for the other. But God has been pleased to order it otherwise; and he has entered upon the scenes of another world, where hope is lost in fruition, and faith perfected by "the evidence of things" realized in vision.

Died, at Stoke Newington, England, on the 9th of March last, MRS. ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD, well known in the literary world, aged 82 years.

Episcopal Seminary of Ohio.

The Western Statesman informs us that the seminary intended to be established in the State of Ohio, and the collecting of funds for which was the object of Bishop Chase's visit to England, will be located on the banks of Alum creek, about twelve miles north of Columbus.

New-York Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Society.

The anniversary meeting of this society was held in St. Paul's Chapel on the afternoon of Wednesday, the 13th of April, 1825. The ground floor of the chapel was occupied by the scholars, about 1600 in number, with the superintendents and teachers of the several schools: the galleries were filled with a highly respectable auditory: and most of the Episcopal clergy of the city were within the chancel; where also was our distinguished visitor the very Rev. Dr. Mountain, archdeacon of Quebec. The whole formed a very interesting and gratifying spectacle. Evening prayer was conducted by the Rev. George

Upfold, rector of St. Luke's Church; and an appropriate address delivered by the Rev. Manton Eastburn, officiating in Christ Church, New-York. The state of the schools in union with this society, will be found by reference to the report of the board of managers, inserted at p. 149 of the present number.

Miscellaneous Articles.

A collection of autograph letters of distinguished persons, from the reign of Elizabeth to that of James II. was recently sold by auction in London. A considerable number of these letters relate to Scottish history. One letter of Claverhouse, describing the battle with the Covenanters at Drumclog, was purchased by the Duke of Buckingham, for twelve guineas; a letter of Mary Queen of Scots, by Lord Grey, for 11*l*. A large portion of the letters connected with Scotland were purchased for the Advocates' library. There were in the whole 120 letters, and they produced upwards of 270*l*.

In recently taking down the Corinthian altar-piece, with which Rochester cathedral was deformed at the time of the Reformation, a discovery has been made of three beautiful Gothic arched recesses and windows. The decorations of the high altar appear in nearly all their pristine beauty, consisting of birds and beasts, *fleurs-de-lis*, &c. There has also been discovered a monument, with a finely executed effigy of one of the early bishops of Rochester, in his pontifical robes, judged to be of the reign of Edward III. A part of the architectural decorations of the tomb have also been found.

The chemical substance called Strychnia has been lately proved to be the active principle of the Upas poison. Its proportion in upas is very small, notwithstanding its powerful action on the animal economy, when used for poisoning arrows. Silicum, the metal of flint, has also been obtained in a separate state.

At a meeting of the Academy of Sciences of Paris, a memoir was lately read, by Dr. Villermé, "on the mortality in France among persons in easy circumstances, compared with what takes place among the indigent." In two arrondissements of Paris, he makes it appear, that the former, which is inhabited by rich persons, has a mortality of one in fifty—and the latter, which is inhabited by the poor, has a mortality of one in twenty-four; there being no other assignable cause for this enormous difference than wealth and poverty. He found the deaths in Rue de la Mortellerie, where the poor are crowded together in unhealthy lodgings, four times and a half

as numerous as in the quays of the Isle St. Louis, where rich persons live in large and well ventilated apartments. He also shows that the mortality rises or falls with the rate of wages.

The coronation of the young king of Tahiti, Pomare III. took place in April last, and was made a solemn and religious festival. The king is only four years of age; his aunt is at the head of the government during his minority. The laws of the island, since it became christianized, were established about four years ago; but as in the interval many things needed settling, from the result of experience and unexpected circumstances, a parliament, the first parliament ever held in the South Seas, met in February last. It consisted of all the families related to the kings of Tahiti and Eimeo, the governors of districts and provinces, and two persons chosen as representatives by the people at large of every district. The session lasted nine days. Every thing submitted to consideration was fully discussed, with calm deliberation and good breeding. The members often differed much in their views, but they never interrupted one another; and when any found that the general sentiment was in favour of a decision contrary to their own, they always yielded to the majority; and their votes were thus, without exception, unanimous.

The Penang Gazette gives the following description of an entertainment given by a Chinese merchant to the European residents—"The bird-nest soup was admirable, as well as the six other soups of muton, frogs, and duck liver. We did ample justice to an excellent hasher made of stewed elephants' tails, served up with the sauce of lizards' eggs. We also noticed particularly that some French gentlemen present seemed to eat with particular *gout* a stewed porcupine, served up in the green fat of a turtle. The beech de mar was excellent, as well as the fish maws served up with sea-weed. There was also a dish quite new to the party, the expense of which was estimated at 200 dollars: it consisted of a platter full of snipes' eyes, garnished round the border with peacocks' combs, and was the most delicious and delicate viand we ever tasted. The desert corresponded with the dinner. We cannot pass over without remark the exquisite *gout* of the jellies made from the rhinoceros' hide."

Ordinations and Consecration.

At an ordination recently held by the Right Rev. Bishop White, in St. Andrew's Church, Philadelphia, the Rev. Enoch Huntington, rector of St. Stephen's Church, Wilkesbarre, was admitted to the holy or-

der of priests. Morning prayers were read by the Rev. Mr. Bedell, and the sermon by the Bishop.

At an ordination, in St. Paul's Church, Boston, on Sunday, the 13th of March, the Rev. Joseph Muensch, minister of Christ Church, Leicester, was admitted to the holy order of priests, by the Right Rev. Dr. Griswold, Bishop of the diocese.

On Wednesday, the 16th of March, the new church erected by the Merrimack manufacturing company, at Chelmsford, was consecrated to the worship and service of Almighty God, by the Bishop of the eastern diocese, under the name of St. Ann's Church. And immediately after the consecration, the Rev. Benjamin Clark Cutler, A.B. deacon, and minister of Christ Church, Quincy, and the Rev. Theodore Edson, A. B. deacon, and minister of the new parish at Chelmsford, were admitted to the holy order of priests. Morning prayer was read by the Rev. Dr. Gardiner. The candidates were presented by the Rev. Dr. Jarvis, and an excellent and appropriate discourse delivered by the Bishop.

On Thursday morning, March 17th, at an ordination held in St. Ann's Church, Chelmsford, George Richardson, A. M. of New-Hampshire, was admitted to the holy order of deacons. An address was delivered by the Bishop, and the candidate was presented by the Rev. Dr. Jarvis.

On Friday, the 15th of April, an ordination was held in Christ Church, New-Brunswick, by the Right Rev. Bishop Croes, when Mr. William W. Bostwick, of the diocese of New-York, was admitted, in the absence of the Right Rev. Dr. Hobart, to the holy order of deacons. Morning prayer was read by the Rev. John Croes, jun. and a sermon delivered by the Rev. William Berrian, assistant rector of Trinity Church, New-York.

Calendar Notices for June, 1825.

5. First Sunday after Trinity.
11. St. Barnabas, the Apostle.
12. Second Sunday after Trinity.
19. Third Sunday after Trinity.
24. The Nativity of St. John the Baptist.
26. Fourth Sunday after Trinity.
29. St. Peter, the Apostle.

Eccelesiastical Meetings in June, 1825.

1. Connecticut Convention, at Newtown.
- Maryland Convention, at Baltimore.
- Ohio Convention, at Zanesville.
4. Delaware Convention.
15. Massachusetts Convention.
22. Vermont Convention.

To correspondents.—The Sermon on the *Priestly Office*, delivered by the Rev. Benj. T. Onderdonk at the admission of the Rev. Cornelius R. Duffie to Priest's orders—and the extract from the Parish Journal of a Clergyman, will appear in our number for June.